

ADAM

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ADVENTURE • SPORT • HUMOUR

MARCH, 1952

ATOMIC BLONDE

— Page 10

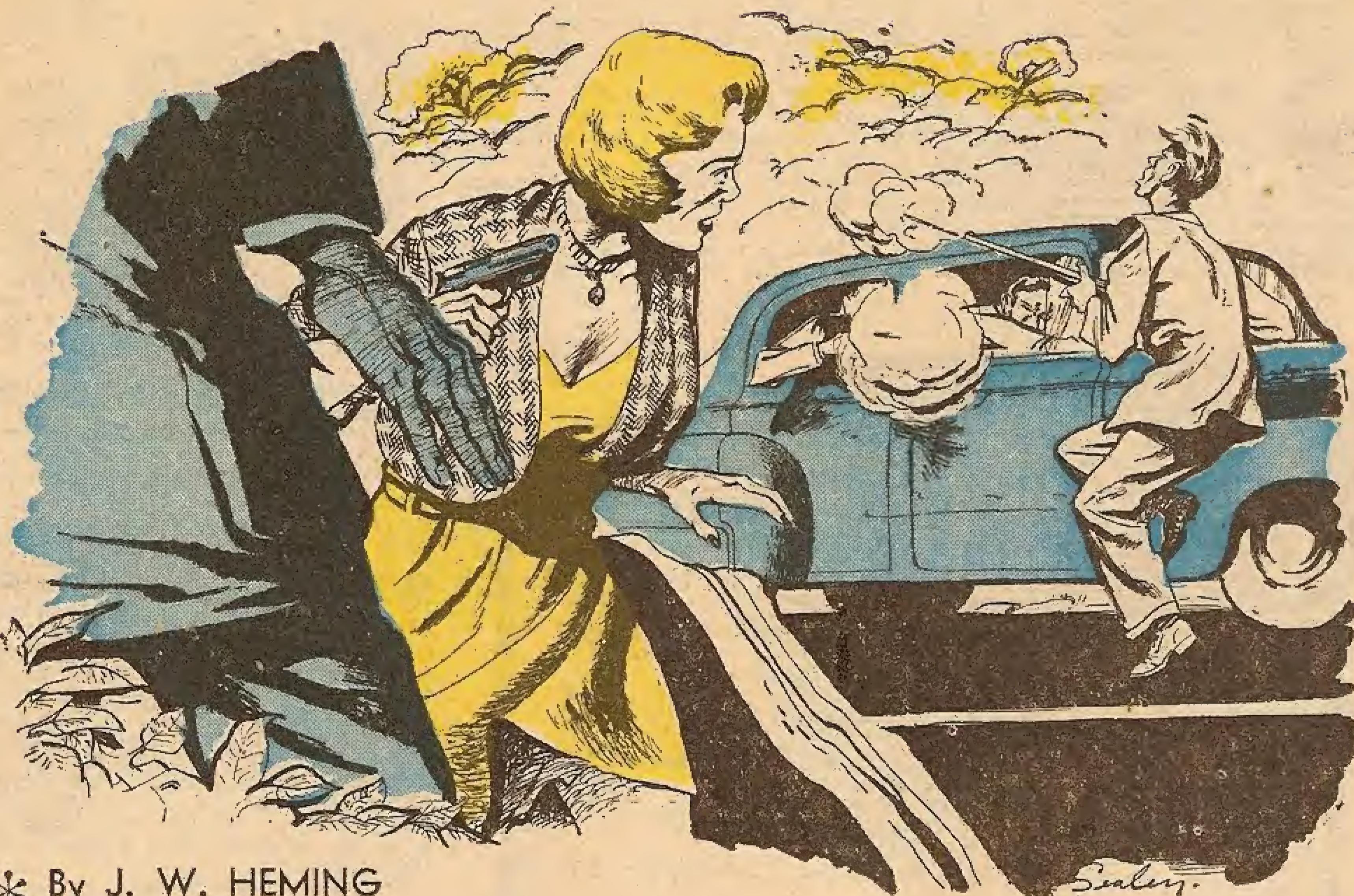
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She's Hollywood's **Sally Forrest**
(to you) . . . but a roving
cameraman says she's "The
Strip" . . . And we quite agree.

LEAD BONUS

A gun roared from the car and Plant staggered back.



* By J. W. HEMING

A TRAIL THAT LED THROUGH ROBBERY TO MURDER, WITH DIAMONDS FOR THE BAIT AND NOBODY TO LOSE—BUT THE FALL GUY.

MARSHTON isn't a particularly big city and the night life is hectic only in spots, so a man would never get rich driving an owl taxi. But I had bought the thing and it managed to keep me while I spent my days studying law.

I'll have to bother you with a very few details about myself. My name is Bill Carroll and my mother died when I was a kid. When my father died, four years ago, I'd grown up to well over my 24 years. Dad was a diamond merchant and we lived well, with a large house in Point Ascot.

And when he died he left quite a bit of lucre. In money and property it

amounted to about 70,000 smackers—and he left it all to me. But—not right away. He had fixed ideas and he thought no male was a responsible man until he passed his 25th year. I'm a bit with him. So he left me a hundred a year, just to make sure I didn't starve, and I was to get the rest when I reached 25. My 25th birthday was still six months off when this all happened.

Now, no one can even smoke on two quid a week these days.

So, after selling some of my things, I spent what money I had on the down-payment of a taxi. For three years I had been plying for hire at

night and giving Blackstone a bash during the day. And that's about all there is to me — except I'm dark, ordinary, five feet ten, and healthy.

I was cruising along Park Crescent when I got a hail. I pulled into the kerb. There were three men and a girl. I found out their names later, but for convenience I'll give them to you now. Ron Plant, who gave the orders, was a tall, thin man about 30, with dark eyes which were always flicking from place to place. He also had a small moustache; but that stayed still. Chick Bell was a chunky little man about the same age; with a square face, and straight, unruly,

fair hair. Bull Harrison was about six feet, and solid. Some of it was fat, but he was still hefty. His face went with his name. The dame was as smooth as a billiard ball, about twenty-five, blonde, long shapely legs, well-dressed. The cigarette hanging from her over-red lips rather coarsened her face. Her name was Lola Dent.

"Where to?" I asked.

"You know the Marshton Trust Company on Hampden Road?" asked Plant.

I glanced at my dashboard clock. "Sure," I said, "but there'll be no one there at midnight, brother."

"The man I have to see will be there," he said. "That's where we're going."

I shrugged and let in the clutch.

I pulled up before the place and knocked up the flag.

"Leave the flag down," said Plant, as he opened the back door. "We'll want you to drive us home. We won't be long."

I didn't like it. "I've finished my shift, pal," I said.

"Stay in the cab, Lola," he said.

The three men got out and went over to the Trust Building. It was a square place, with a side passage blocked by a grilled gate. I saw one of the men unlock the gate and then the three of them vanished down the

sidewalk, leaving the gate open. They seemed to be stepping very carefully and quietly.

I looked along the business street. It was almost deserted. On one side of the Trust Building was a church; on the other side some office buildings. Across the road was the Central Bank. All had a deserted look and were far too dark and peaceful for my comfort.

Lola lit another cigarette. I looked down at her crossed legs, then up at the church steeple. She put away her matches and fumbled in her hefty handbag.

For a dame, she didn't talk much. She smoked two more cigarettes, and I gave up worrying and looking at her legs and concentrated on law. I had just got to "Public policy is the prevailing opinion of wise men as to what is for the public good," when I heard a loud, booming crash. I twisted my head. The sound seemed to come from the Trust Building, which was still dark.

That was enough for me. I leaned forward and twisted the ignition key. The girl could get out later. I was going home.

She twisted suddenly in her seat and jammed something against my side.

"This is a gun, pal," she said. "It is loaded. If you don't want me to

unload it through the muzzle, just let this car stand. But leave the engine running. We might have to pull out quickly."

Bull ran out of the sidewalk and across to the car.

"He wanted to leave," said Lola. "I gotta gun on him."

Bull opened the door, got into the back of the car, left the door open and drew a gun. I was watching him in the mirror and a street light put a glow around him. He shoved the gun against the back of my neck.

"Sit pretty, mug," he said. "And be ready to move fast."

Then there is the sharp, staccato bark of a revolver—once, twice. I jumped so hard I nearly knocked myself out against Bull's gun. I looked at the Trust Building and saw Plant and Bell come pounding out of the sidewalk, carrying a small leather bag. A shot sounded behind them. Bell had a gun in his hand. They raced across the footpath and threw themselves into the back of the car. Bull kept his gun on me.

"Get movin', mug!" he yelled. I got moving.

As we pulled out, someone ran from the sidewalk and slammed shots at us. I pressed on the accelerator.

"Swing around into Lancaster St.," yelled Plant, "then down Sewell St. to Bounty Rd. and keep on goin' along there."

I did as I was told. The route took us almost in a circle and on to the main road.

"Which way on Bounty?" I called. "Toward the sea?"

"No, mug. Toward the Big Smoke."

Bull and Lola still had their guns on me. Bell was leaning out a window, his gun watching to pin pursuers. Plant watched through the back window, hugging the bag.

WHEN we drew out of town without signs of pursuit I had time to think again. I had assisted at a crime! Certainly I had been an unwilling assistant and the law might take a lenient view of it; but I wasn't worrying about that. The law was never likely to get wise over me—except at a coroner's inquest!

"Smart work, driver," said Plant. "You can ease her down to fifty now. We got away so fast they haven't even got started. You better mind this, Lola."

He leaned over and put the bag in Lola's lap. She kept her gun in my ribs.

I eased the bus back to 45 and wondered how I could get out of this still on my feet. Which led me to wonder how I got into it. Why hadn't these birds just followed the usual procedure and snatched a car? There was one explanation. Perhaps none of them could drive. Lots of people can't. And they might not have wanted to bring in a driver and cut the share-out—or perhaps they couldn't find one they could trust. Well, they couldn't trust me. The idea that they couldn't drive gave food for thought.

"How far you want to go?" I asked.

"All the way to the Big Smoke," said Plant.

"I'm not fuelled for a 40-mile drive," I told him, quite truthfully.

"That has been arranged for," he said. "Just outside a dump called Split Falls we've cached 10 gallons of juice. Split Falls is only six miles out, and if you say you haven't enough juice for that I'll have to be

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"He's a tired businessman all right, but not through work . . ."

ADAM, March, 1952

strict with you. It's not far now. We'll tell you when you come to it."

"I hope you've got a funnel. My tank is a bit tricky and you'll have trouble—"

"The trouble's all yours, pal. We don't know anything about cars."

Which was nice to know.

"Did you get what you were after?" Lola asked.

"Yes," said Plant. "There was a lot of other good stuff there, but we had to let it go. We made a blue. There are two watchmen. We slugged the first one down hard and he was quiet. Then we went to work on the tank and got into the safe deposit. Where the other joker was all that time I don't know. Perhaps he was off duty. Anyway, he comes in and hears us and starts shootin'."

"I winged him," said Bell.

"So we had to take it on the lam," said Plant. "I'd already put the rocks in the bag, so I grabbed that. That second watchman was bad business, but it all turned out all right, and we got what we went after. Slow up, driver, we're coming to the spot."

Split Falls is only six miles out of Marshton (as Plant had said); but, with Marshton, six miles is well out in the country. We hadn't seen a house for the last mile—just fields and trees. Just here it was trees. The village of Split Falls is about half a mile from the main road and it is clustered around the railway line. So even here we were still in the bush.

"Pull up!" said Plant suddenly, and I pulled up so suddenly they were all jerked forward like to break their necks.

"Don't do that again, mug," growled Bull. "It's likely to jerk my trigger-finger."

"Pull into the side, near that tall pine," said Plant. "Get down with him, Bull and Lola, just to see he plays no tricks. Don't kill him if you can help it. Get down, driver. What's your name?"

"Bill," I said, opening my door, and ready to run.

"Keep still, Bill," said Plant. "Till Bull gets there. Keep your gun on him, Lola."

Bull came to my door. "Get out," he said, waving the gun at me.

I got out. He stepped back, and I stood still until Lola slid across and got out behind me. Bull waved his gun.

"Across there," he said. "Over the road. Not too fast."

I walked slowly across the road, telling myself it was now or never.

"Put out your cigarette, Lola," growled Bull.

"But, Bull, I—"

"Don't argue. Mug, the stuff is behind that big bush there—the one behind the thick tree. In tins. Get it—and watch your step. I'm right behind you."

"And so am I," said Lola.

They stopped and stood together, their guns levelled, about a yard from the bush. I knew what I was going to do now. I walked around the bush. I bent and felt underneath it. My hands contacted a tin. I straightened up, holding it.

"Now bring it—" began Bull.

I raised the tin suddenly and heaved it at them. Then dropped

flat. The girl ducked and side-stepped. As a sort of reflex action, Bull fired when he saw the tin almost on him.

It was a silly thing to do. Someone fired another shot. I guessed it was Bell, because the others would not be feeling like target practice.

I had not entirely expected that explosion; but I had hoped something of the sort might happen when the tin hit the ground. Or if it burst and sprayed Lola's cigarette. She had put that out and dashed one of my hopes. Then Bull had supplied the sparks.

I came to the gully, and almost rolled down it. But I had played in this gully as a kid and I knew every inch of it.

I could hear the gang threshing and searching for me. I hoped Bull and Lola had been burnt to cinders, although I feared they weren't.

THE sounds of the pursuit died away and I planned my next move. To start walking back to town was one thing to do; but it would be hard and probably dangerous. The gang might watch the roads. About a mile through the trees I would come to Spruce Road and I might get help there, or a phone where I could ring the police to come and get me. Now, who lived on Spruce Road? That wasn't easy to remember, for few people lived over that way. Yes, there was a small farm about a mile back from the road, at the foot of the pine slopes. I had an idea a man named Shaw owned the place. He would surely have a phone. The gang would hardly expect me to go farther away from town, so Shaw's farm seemed the safest bet.

I decided to give the farming family time to get awake. I suppose I have an inferiority complex, but I hate troubling people.

The sun came up, and a man and a girl came into view. The girl rounded up a cow and the old man started to chop wood. I decided it was time I called on them, so I straightened my cap and began to move down the hill.

I paused, very abruptly. The farm stood in open country and I had a long view of the rough track leading down from the farm to Spruce Road. And coming up that road were four persons!

I slipped behind a pine tree. If Plant and his friends were going to call on the farmer, who was I to strain his hospitality? I could wait.

The farmer stopped chopping wood and went to meet them. I had an idea. This was my chance. If I could reach my bus before they did I could ride back to town and have the police out here while Plant and Co. were asking questions about me and perhaps eating breakfast.

I made a wide sweep and started on a steady lop through the rough country toward Bounty Road. I had been tired, but that dropped off. I had a good three miles to cover, but the sun was not much more than an hour higher when I reached the main road.

There was no bus in sight!

I found a great patch of burnt ground where I had thrown the tin, although there was no sign of the tin. I crossed to where I'd parked the car. The tyre marks were plain



"Number 17011, Spike Malone, who was to play 'Sugar Blues' on a hack saw, is not with us tonight!"

in the dust at the side of the road and I followed them until I came to the bus. It was not far. There was no doubt they knew little about driving. It seemed as though they had pushed the bus into the trees and it was hardly hidden from the road.

I got inside and turned her on. Nothing happened. I got out again and lifted the bonnet. They had known enough to rip out the distributor arm.

When I finished swearing I decided they wouldn't want to carry the arm with them so may have thrown it somewhere. I began to search under bushes and in the branches of trees. I didn't find it but I did find the bag. It was pushed into the lower branches of a leafy tree. I opened it and looked inside.

Something threw the sunlight back in my face. I knew diamonds when I saw them. These were big and there was a lot of them. I decided it was my turn to play "Hide the slipper," so I set the bag aside. I continued my search for the maggy, but had to give up at last in case the gang came back.

Where to hide the bag? One place suggested itself straight off. The Pass. I came to The Pass and hid the bag under some rocks. It then struck me that I had done a silly thing.

I should have made for Split Falls while I'd had the chance; but now I was as close to Shaw's farm as to Split Falls. So I made for the farm again.

I took a good look at the place before I moved in. The farmer was hoeing the kitchen garden. The girl came to the back door and emptied out a dish of water. There was no sign of my travelling companions. I found out later the farmer's name was Joe Shaw and the girl was his daughter, Pamela.

He looked up from his hoeing as I approached the house; he went inside. Before I reached the door, he and the girl were standing in it.

"This way," said the girl, looking at me in a queer way.

She was a brunette, about twenty, curved provokingly, and freshly pretty. She had the nicest pair of eyes I've ever seen. But they looked at me with a puzzled expression.

She led the way into what was presumably the drawing-room or parlor. She pointed to a wall phone.

"Thanks," I said again, crossed the room and reached for the receiver.

"Don't touch that phone, young feller!" said the man's voice, and I turned to look at him—well, not at him exactly but at the double-barrelled shotgun he had aimed at my guts!

"It's no good yer lookin' surprised, young feller!" the soil-tickler went on. "I know all about yer. The police hev been here, yer see, with that young lady yer robbed of her jewel'ry and then tried to set on fire. Oh, I know what a fiend yer are! They told me yer'd be dressed like a taxi-driver and that your cab had broke down and yer'd wanna use the phone to get it fixed. And then mebbe kill us both to save identification. Oh, I seen the burns on that poor detective—"

He looked like going on for ever, so I broke in.

How do salmon find...

the way home?

SPARK UP, you aident Isaak Waltons; the mystery may be solved.

Latest tests indicate that a sharp nose and a long memory may explain the salmon's strange ability to find its way home from the sea. Scientists of Wisconsin University (US) have shown that salmon can easily smell the difference between the waters of two streams, even though the streams are nearly similar in physical character. In other words, salmon can smell their way back to the stream of their birth after three to five years at sea. The US scientists obtained their evidence that salmon have extremely sharp noses from experiments in specially constructed aquariums. In the aquariums, the scientists changed the water and introduced new odors without disturbing the fish. In one end of each aquarium was a feeding area, equipped with a light electrical shocker. It didn't take salmon fingerlings long to learn that water from one stream means food is available and that water from another stream means that an electrical shock awaits them if they swim into the feeding area. The salmon retained the power to discriminate stream odors for long periods of time, even though the electric testing had been discontinued. Thus—according to the scientists—it appears that substances in the water (probably coming from vegetation and soils in the area through which the stream runs) give each stream an odor which salmon can smell, remember and recognise after a long period of non-exposure. US Fisheries' experts are now hoping to be able to train salmon to return to picked waters to spawn, bypassing streams on which dams have been built and preventing the enormous waste which now takes place as salmon butt against dams and die before they breed.

"Listen," I said. "They sold you a pup. I'm—"

"They sold me nothin'," he started again. "I sold them some milk and they paid me for dressin' their burns. Oh, you're—"

"Give me a moment," I splashed in over his torrent. "I was going to ring the Marshton police. Let your daughter get the number. Then you'll hear the story I tell them. Those people are thieves and killers. They told you lies—kidded to you—"

"No one ever kidded to Joe Shaw, young feller," he gushed on. "I know a crook when I see one. And you're it—"

The girl wasn't so sure. She put in her spoke. "If I get the police number, Dad, we can find out. In fact, we'll have to ring the police in any case and—". She stopped, her eyes looking out the window. Her voice dropped, became a little scared. "Here come those people again and they're nearly to the house!"

MY stomach turned two hand-springs and a double somersault. There I was facing a double-barrelled shotgun which could blow me in half and those toughs were coming along—and they had no reason to love me.

"Listen," I gasped. "Don't let them get their hands on me. Put up that gun and let me—"

"Aha!" said Shaw, very knowingly. "So they are police and you're afraid o' bein' caught. Yer just wait here and we'll thrash this out."

"But they'll kill me!"

"Oh, no, they won't," said the farmer, moving so that his gun could rove from the door to me. "I'll keep this gun on them as well as you."

My gaze fixed agonisingly on the door. From the corner of my eye I saw the girl slip from the other door.

Plant walked in, followed by his company of stars. They all looked tired and the bushes had done their clothes no good. And Bull was a sight for tired eyes. Was he sore! His face was blistered and burnt, there were great patches in his clothes which had been burnt away.

Lola had also suffered. One arm was bandaged and one leg. Her clothes had been burnt away in spots. When they were all in but Bell, Shaw spoke.

"Hold up there!" he said. "Just keep still while I explain somethin'. This young feller says yer ain't police but is tellin' me lies. He wants me to ring the police. Well, we're gonna do that. You got any objections?"

Plant spoke to Shaw; but his cold eyes were on me.

"You better put that gun down, mister," he said. "The little man who was with us has just nipped around the sideway and is now pointing a gun at you through the window. Put down your gun or I'll tell him to shoot you."

Shaw's eyes went to the window. So did mine. Bell was there all right, and he had his gun in his hand. At that moment Plant sprang on Shaw and tore the shotgun from his hands. He pushed Shaw against the wall.

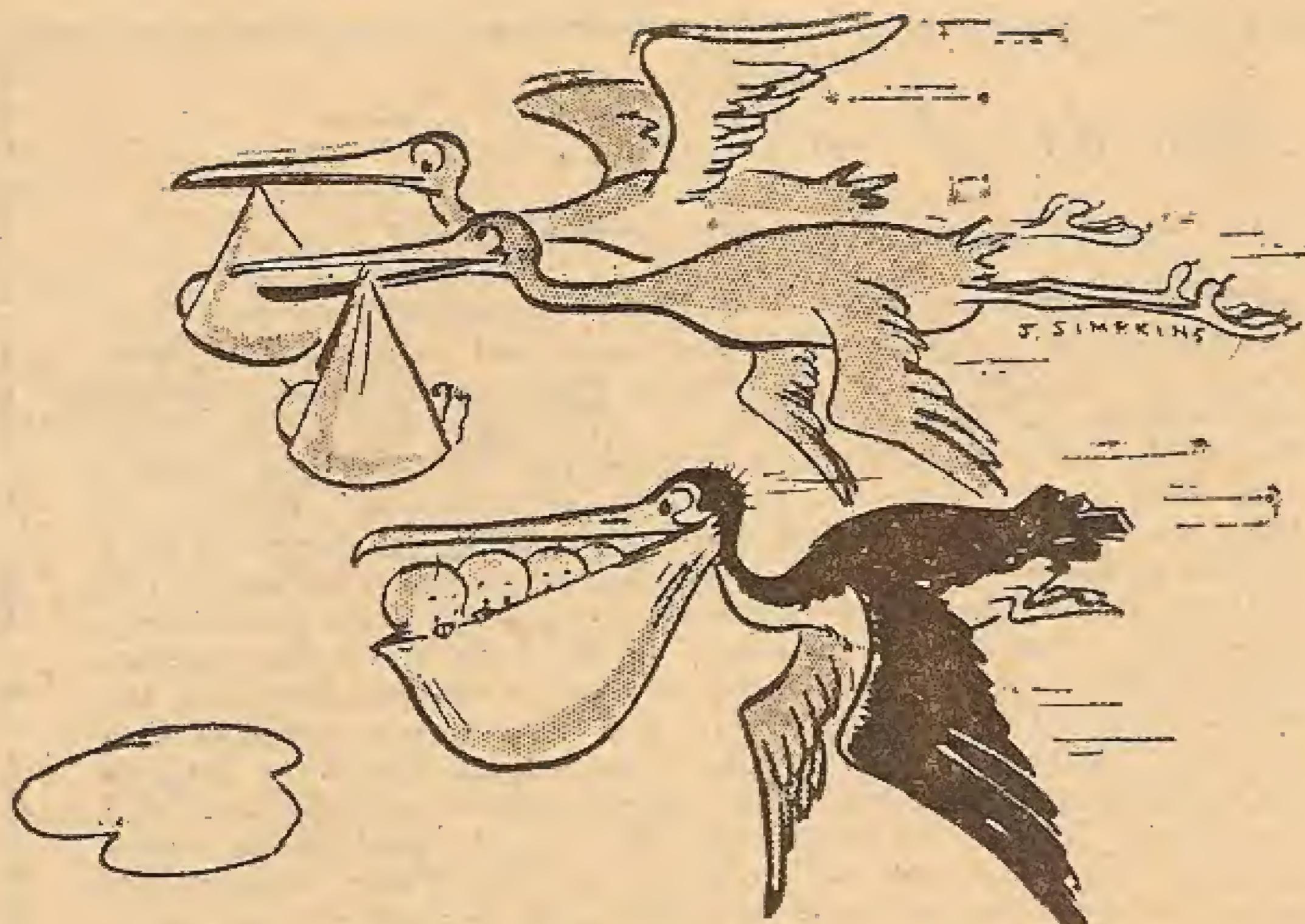
"You just stand there, mister," he said, "and keep quiet and still. Then you won't get hurt. We've got some business to do."

"I'll say we have!" said Bull through his teeth.

"Not sudden!" said Lola. "Let him suffer as I'm suffering. Do him slow."

"Bust the phone first," said Plant. "Do it properly so it can't be mended. Cut wires can be joined. Tear it down and jump on it."

"If you kill me—slow or fast," I said as Bell scrambled through the



"He handles everything over twins."

window and made for the phone, "you'll never get your diamonds."

That made them all stiffen.

"And what about a driver?" I asked.

"That's what we came back for—a driver," said Plant. "We only just remembered we saw a truck in the shed. Either the farmer or his daughter must be able to drive. We were going to make them drive us. But what about the diamonds?"

"I saw you come here before," I said, "so I made back to my bus. I found it, with the distributor missing. I searched for it and found the bag of diamonds. I've hidden them some other place. If you think you can find them in all this bush you must be the prize optimist."

"Smash the phone," said Plant, and Bell set about the job, making a nice mess of the instrument. Plant looked at me. "You'll tell us where you hid the rocks."

"You must have me mixed up with someone else," I said.

"Let me work on him, Ron," said Bull.

He crossed the room and swung a punch. I let it go by.

"Unconscious men tell no tales," I said.

"Give him the hot foot," said Lola. "I got one, so let him have one—and good."

"You going to talk, mug?" Plant asked me politely.

"Yes," I said. "About anything except diamonds."

"Take off his shoe!" said Plant. "Chick, you watch the farmer."

Bell swung his gun off me and at Shaw, who was still leaning against the wall with his mouth open, his mind trying to about-turn, and finding it hard. Lola had not drawn a gun, but Plant had the shotgun.

Bull stepped in gleefully, so happy in his work that he moved right in front of Plant. So I let Bull have my knee, hard! He yelled and bent over. I brought up the other knee and it squashed his nose and sent him over backwards. That left me in the open and Plant raised the gun.

"Don't shoot!" said a voice from the other door, and Pamela stood

there looking at Plant along the sights of a Winchester!

Bell twisted quickly, bringing his gun with him. She moved her barrel six inches and stabbed flame at him. He spun and fell against the wall. And then she pumped another shell into the breach and her gun was back on Plant before he had time to move his trigger-finger.

I stepped across quickly to his side, reached over and took the shotgun and his revolver. I checked it. It was fully loaded.

"Thanks, pal," I said to Pam. "You can put up the gun. I'll take over now. Just look in this kind lady's handbag and take out the little shooter there, also collect that one from the floor near the small man. The big man, sleeping peacefully, should also have one. I'll keep an eye on them and, boy, how I hope they give me a chance to shoot!"

The girl leaned her rifle against the wall and collected the guns. I hope she was used to swearing, because Bell, Lola and Plant were giving a gusher. Pam put the guns on the sideboard and picked up her rifle again.

"Now some rope, if you've got any," I said. "I want to try out some fancy knots. And as the phone is busted I'm afraid I'll have to borrow your truck and your services to get these birds to a cage in Marshton."

It took time, but we managed it all right. Joe Shaw took some minutes to get over the shock; but he was helping at the end. It was an open truck and not very clean, so we sat the trussed birds on the floor while Joe and I sat on boxes near the tailboard. Joe had his shotgun again and I had Plant's revolver. Pamela drove, her rifle on the seat beside her. We hadn't roped Lola because of her burnt arm, although we had no such tenderness with the unconscious Bull.

WHILE the roping was going on Pam had turned on the radio in time for the news, and we learned that the Marshton Trust had been robbed the night before of £25,000 worth of diamonds. The announcer

also pointed out that about a month before one of the city papers had carried a story on diamonds and had mentioned the hoard in the Trust Building. To show his erudition the reporter had even mentioned the number of the safe deposit box, thus giving some crooks ideas. In some manner the bright boys got keys to the side gate and side door. They had let themselves in and bashed the watchman—too hard. He was dead. They had gone on with blowing open the door of the safe deposit and had just got the diamonds when another watchman, who usually spent his supper break with the first watchman, walked in on them. In the resultant gun battle he had been shot in the arm. The killers had escaped in a local taxi, the number and owner of which was known. The police wanted to interview the driver.

Which made it look as though I was wanted!

The farmer's truck was a T model Ford. It might have been good in its day, but that was a long time ago. Pam nursed it over the ruts and we reached Spruce Road, with every tooth jarred loose. The going was better then; but not for long. Within half a mile the damn thing sputtered and stopped. It wouldn't go again, so Pam got down to look at the engine. It seemed to puzzle her. She tried a few alterations but could get no life.

"You keep that shotgun on 'em, Dad," I said to Shaw and hopped down to help Pam.

We got busy on the engine. It was a mess. Then suddenly things happened in the truck again. Plant had started to talk to Shaw and had drawn his attention. Then Lola had swung her great handbag and crowned Shaw, almost knocking him cold. She grabbed the shotgun and we found the two barrels staring us in the face!

I knew this was likely to be serious for me. We were close to the trees. I made a flying leap and got among them. I hoped Lola would fire. The kick would have sent her over the tailboard! But she kept the gun on Pam and told her to come around to the back of the truck. Pam's rifle was still on the front seat.

I skirted around through the trees, Plant's gun in my hand. But I was chicken-hearted about shooting Lola and I also had to remember that her gun was pointing at Pam. Shaw was sitting in the bottom of the truck rubbing his head.

Lola got near the tailboard and put the two barrels against Pam's left breast.

"Let my mates free, old 'un," she said over her shoulder, "or I'll blast your daughter to hell."

Still dazed, Shaw undid the ropes I had so carefully tied.

"Drop that gun or I'll drop you," I yelled at Lola.

"It'll be too bad for your little pal if you do," said Lola.

I knew she was right. Even if I got home a killing shot it wouldn't stop Lola pulling those triggers. Plant was freed and he stood up and looked toward me. He reached over for the rifle on the front seat.

"Don't touch that!" I snapped. He straightened again. "Listen, mug," he said. "If you don't come out o' there with your hands up by the time I count five Lola will pull the triggers and blow the girl to

bits. On five, Lola . . . and I mean it. We've got no more time to mess about. The hunt must be up. And I want those diamonds. One—two —"

I had taken quite a fancy to Pam. I owed her something, too, for saving me before. At "Four" I threw Plant's gun as far into the bushes as I could and came out with my hands up.

Lola swung the shotgun toward me, her lips drawn back from her teeth. Plant pushed it up.

"I want those diamonds," he said. "When I've got them you can do what you like to him."

"That should make me tell you," I remarked.

"I've found a way to make you do things," he said. "This girl is the key. If you want her to live, you'll lead us to those rocks. If you want her to die a nasty death, with trimmings, you'll stay obstinate. How about it?"

I shrugged. While there was life there was hope.

"I'll show you," I said. "But it's a long way from here, near the main road and I don't think we'll ever get this thing to go again. It's dead."

Plant thought that over. He looked along the road to where it joined a wider road. It was about half-a-mile away and cars could be seen occasionally passing. He looked along Spruce Road.

"We'll snatch a car," he said. "Doesn't any traffic ever come along here?"

"Very seldom," said Pam.

"What's that cross-road?"

"Pine Road," I said. "Leads to Bounty Road."

"All right," said Plant. "We'll walk along to there and get a car."

"Bring it back here, Ron," said Bull. "I'm sick."

"So'm I," said Bell.

"Get down," said Plant. "We can't waste the time. Help Lola down and she can hold the gun on these others while I get down. You three walk ahead. Lola and I will be right behind you."

So the procession started, with Bull and Chick bringing up the rear . . . very sad objects.

We reached Pine Road.

"Get behind those bushes," said Plant. "Lola, get well back and keep your gun on them. I need a smaller gun. Where's my gun, mug?"

"I threw it into the bushes," I said. "There's some on the side-board at the farm. I'll run back for 'em."

"You've got a lot comin' to you," said Plant. "Now keep down, while I watch for a car."

"It might be a police car, Ron!" said Bull.

"You think I'm a fool that I don't know a police car when I see it?" snarled Plant. "I'll let 'em go by until I see one with a lone driver—and it won't be a black car. Right, keep quiet. Here comes a car now."

We could hear the hum of it from far off—and it was no police car. Not with that engine. I looked along the road and it came into view. It was a light-blue tourer and the middle-aged driver sat in lone state as the bus chugged along.

I looked up at the heavens. The

sun was right overhead. It must be lunch-time and I was hungry. But I had my doubts as to whether I would ever eat again.

"Lie flat on the ground," I said softly to Pam and Shaw. They did as they were told.

I HAD a new idea. While attention was focused on the hold-up I was going to grab Lola and get that gun if I could. There was no direct danger to Pam now—or not so much.

Plant stepped out into the centre of the road and waved his left hand at the car. There were no other cars in sight. Plant held the Winchester against the back of his leg. The car pulled up and Plant walked close to the driver. He brought up the rifle.

"Get out!" he said.

I was just about to spring for Lola when some surprising things happened. A gun roared from the back of the car and Plant staggered back, the rifle firing into the air. Two heads wearing police caps popped up behind the guns. And they had all Lola's attention.

I made my leap and Lola went rolling as I twisted the gun from her hands. I wasn't gentle and she was burnt. We made some noise and the two coppers in the car opened up on us.

"Hey!" I yelled. "We're on your side!"

Bull and Chick forgot how sick they were and started to run for the thick timber. Very happily I emptied the two barrels at their legs and they went rolling. The coppers opened up again and the air was full of humming lead.

"Break it down!" I yelled. "I'm doing your job for you. Get up, Lola, before I bend these barrels over your skull."

The four of us walked out on to the road and I took the first easy breath for some time. Plant was crumpled up—and he looked as though he wouldn't make it. Blood was spreading out below him.

The coppers stepped down, their guns on us.

"The other two are back there," I said; "their legs full of lead—if they have any legs. They're sorry they picked my cab."

"You're the taxi-driver that's wanted," said a john.

"And never have I been so happy to see a copper," I said. "How did you pop up like that?"

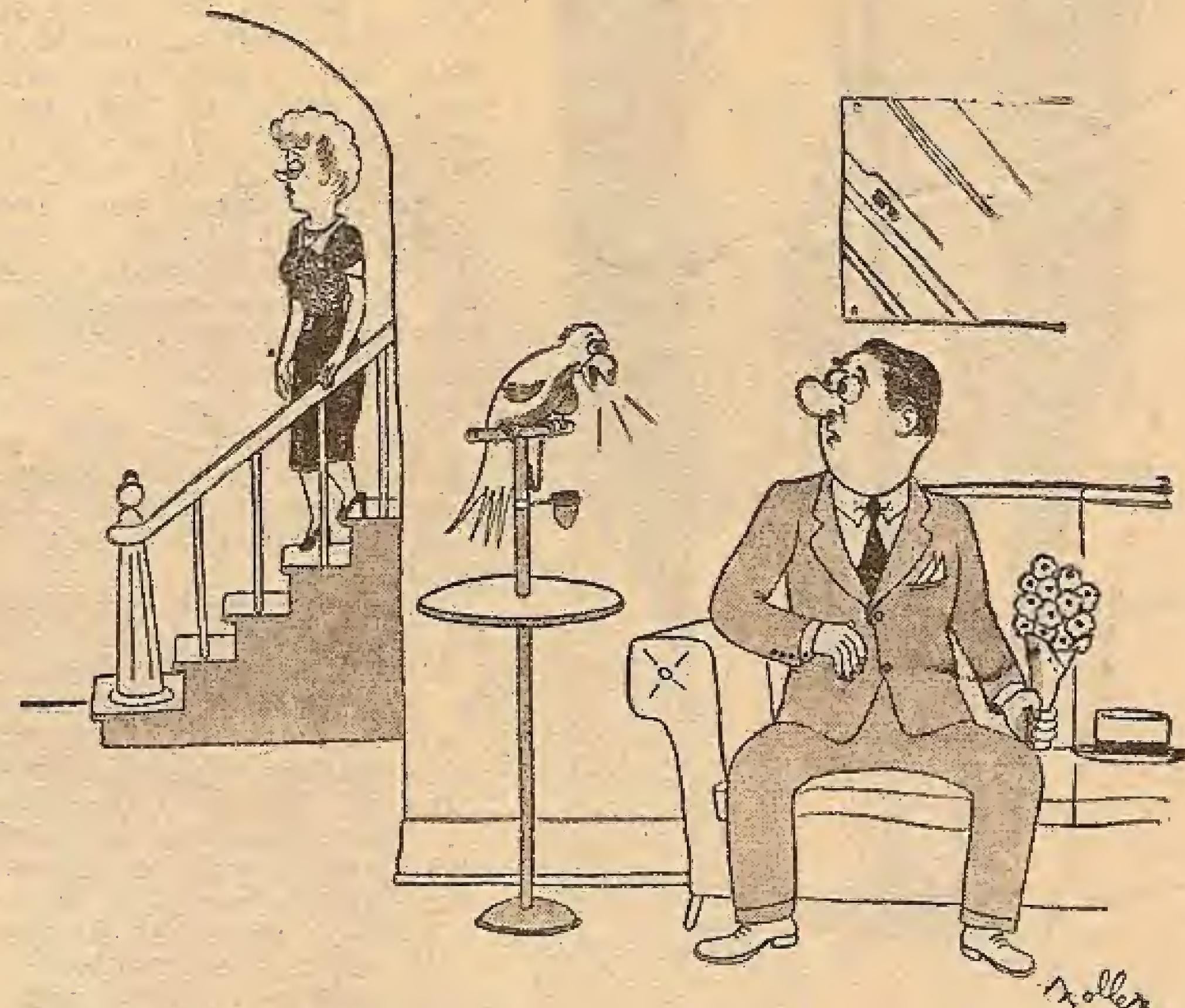
"Your car was found this morning, but the diamonds weren't. We saw the car was useless and the Chief worked it out that the tough meat would try to steal another car. So he requisitioned a few dozen cars and drivers and we have been touring the roads. Each car had two armed men in the back, crouched down. You get tired of being that way and we had just about given up hope that the gang would try to grab our car. But we were always lucky. Have we got the whole gang?"

"Yes," I said, "but I wasn't a full member. My share was to be paid in hot lead."

"You're Carroll, aren't you? And where's the diamonds?"

"I got 'em and hid 'em in Spruce Gully." I was happy and full of beans. I had my arm around Pam, so why not? I even tried a joke. "Of course, I'm not sure where I hid those diamonds. I might never find them again."

The copper grinned. "That'll be too bad," he said. "Those diamonds were in your father's collection and stock when he died. He left 'em to you. So it'll be your loss—not ours!"



" . . . But you're different from all the others, George. But you're different from all the others, Ralph. But you're different from all the others, Thomas. But you're . . . "

Atomic Blonde

RICK'S JOB WAS TO TRAP A GUNMAN INTO DEATH,
IRRESPECTIVE OF A LOVELY TORCH-SINGER
WHO WORE A GUN WITH HER EVENING GOWN



SPECIAL AGENT Rick Myron looked at the body on the morgue slab and felt the hair rise on the back of his neck. It was the stoolie.

What stirred Myron's hackles was the fact that it was less than two hours since he had left the pigeon's fleabag room in the French Quarter, with the information that he would find his man at the Cafe Vieux Carré. And the fact that he had just by a hair missed drawing a berth on the next slab himself. The chill of the place struck into him.

The pale object under the white light had a plain meaning: Rick Myron was up against an organisation, and already they had him spotted. They must have been watching him when he went up to the stoolie's room. The stoolie's death had followed within minutes.

Only quick action with his shoulder-clipped Magnum had kept Myron alive. Strang had been at the cafe all right—waiting for Myron in the back alley. The knot still throbbed on the back of Myron's crew-cut head, where the sap's first blow had landed. Only his instinctive speed in falling before the blow landed, at the sound of the footsteps behind him, had lessened its force, and left him conscious enough to wing his ambusher. And conscious enough to recognise the giant form of Strang, the escaped lifer.

That little trap had been proof enough that he was spotted. Coming here to the morgue had been only a matter of clinching the final grim evidence.

There was only one answer now—get Strang before Strang got him.

Myron thought swiftly. He couldn't go back to his own room—not now. And Strang would have disappeared again into the labyrinths of New Orleans' French Quarter, bleeding from the Magnum slug in his arm. The best chance was to go back to the cafe where the trail was still hot. In a public place, he'd be out of their reach for the moment. And he might uncover something.

He turned to the morgue attendant and said, "Okay, Sammy, thanks. You can cover him up now."

The smocked oldster drew the sheet back over the body. Rick My-

ron essayed a macabre joke: "Don't close up, Sammy. You may have a busy night."

Then he went outside and waved down a cab. This was one time when walking might not be a healthful form of exercise.

Rick Myron dropped down the steps into the murky atmosphere of the nightclub. The place was crowded with a mixture of jive-happy college kids, French Quarter characters, a few tourists with money to spend, and the assorted hangers-on who lived off them.

The thing to do was to pass himself as one of the crowd. Let one of the leeches hook on to him, then do some pumping.

He found a table which had just been vacated near the bandstand, and sat down.

It was the voice that hit him. It was low and torchy, exactly on key, but with a suppressed throb that gave the words of the song an intensity of meaning that the songwriter had never put into them. The kind of voice that went straight into your memory—and into your blood.

Rick turned in surprise. It wasn't often you heard a canary like this in a basement dive.

The sight of the girl struck Rick like a physical shock. She was standing directly facing him, only a few feet away. The spotlight that held her caught Rick at its edge. She was holding her hands out in a gesture of appeal, a tawny cascade of hair falling down over her shoulders, her clear, delicate features touched with a sultry smile. Her gown was a golden sheath that matched her hair and limned her body with flame.

Rick stared. His eyes unexpectedly met the girl's, and Rick felt an electric charge leap between them. The girl's eyes suddenly went wide, and he knew she had also felt it. Then her eyelids came down again, as she masked her emotions. She whirled abruptly away, and finished her song without coming near Rick again. Then the spotlight flicked off and the girl disappeared from sight.

He ducked his whole body and dived for the girl. Her .38 went off wildly...

* By HUMPHREY JONES





"We moved."

The emcee was on the microphone, saying, "That was Sheila Dawn, folks. If you liked that, stick around. She'll be back with more of the same."

Rick sat back and lit a cigarette. He inhaled deeply, relaxing. He had just realised that he had been sitting on the edge of his chair.

A REDHEAD, who had been talking to the hatcheck girl when he came in, drifted up to the table.

"You all alone, handsome?"

"I was." Rick's gaze went over her. A little faded, a little hard and tired, brightened up with too much paint. The girl smiled consciously and sat down.

"I could use a drink," the girl said.

Rick signalled a waiter and the redhead ordered a highball.

Rick decided to play the college-boy act. Give him an excuse for inquisitiveness.

"Good music here," he said. "The real blues."

The girl laughed, somewhat stridently. "Yeah. That's right. But you don't look like any hepcat to me. What gives?"

Rick gave her the boyish grin. "No—not a hepcat. Making a study of it. Doing some write-ups. I really like jazz, though."

The girl cocked an eyebrow at him wisely. "Write-ups, eh?" She laughed again. "Say, I could tell you enough about these musicians to write a book."

"Fine. That's what I'm after."

"Well, buy me another drink."

Rick flagged down the waiter again. He went off to get the order. The girl leaned forward, her elbows on the table and smiled slowly, hugging to herself some private knowledge. "Yes, sir. You could write a book."

The waiter came back, his tray empty. He leaned over and whispered in the redhead's ear. She looked up at Rick, startled, and said, "Excuse me—I gotta see somebody."

Rick cursed inwardly as the girl got up and headed for a table at the side of the room. He saw her stop beside a swarthy, thick-set torpedo in a dinner-jacket, who stood up and spoke to her angrily, his narrow eyes flicking toward Rick. Rick saw the girl's mouth drop open. Then she hurried away. The torpedo sat down and stared narrowly across the intervening tables at Rick.

Rick felt the chill in his spine again. The torpedo obviously was one of Strang's mob.

Of course, Rick knew, he could step to the phone at any moment and call the city cops. A squad car could be waiting to pick him up the instant he stepped out the front door. But that was out. Rick wanted to play this his way.

Besides, the case was just beginning to get really interesting. Sheila Dawn was back on the floor, moaning another torchy ballad, and this time she wasn't avoiding Rick's table.

Apparently she had had time to think about that moment when

Rick's eyes and hers had met—and decided that electricity was a good thing. She came sweeping close, and now stood before him. Honestly, frankly, she was singing straight at him.

Rick's pulse stepped up a beat. He let his gaze merge with hers. She returned his look. A warm feeling spread inside him, and he turned on the boyish smile—this time without deliberation. Sheila Dawn finished a phrase and paused, and a smile touched her lips. It was a shy smile. Then she went on with the song, and turned away, finally.

Rick's emotions rocked him. Sheila Dawn—she was a nice, sweet kid! The tinsel glamor was no more a real part of her than the gown she wore. Singing to him had not been an act, he was sure. She would have picked one of the rich, one-night tourists for that. Instead, she had picked a clean-cut guy she just liked the looks of—and Rick knew instinctively she wouldn't like the looks of many.

This time, instead of going to a dressing room when she finished singing, she sat down at an empty table beside the bandstand.

Rick got up and went over to her. She looked up, still half-smiling.

"A drink?"

"Thanks. I'd like one."

Rick sat down.

"You haven't been here long, have you?"

"How did you know? No. I was an organist, and played piano sometimes in a band. But somebody decided I had other talents, and I needed the money, so—"

"So here you are. That's fine," Rick said. "That's wonderful."

Sheila Dawn looked down at her fingers. "I'm glad you liked me." Still the half-smile.

Rick waited till she looked up again, then said quietly, "Not did. Do."

The waiter came, and took their orders. Rick glanced around and saw the heavy-set torpedo still watching him. From other parts of the room, he could sense other eyes on him. But Sheila Dawn apparently was not part of the setup. The waiter was impassive when he brought the drinks, and departed quietly.

Rick sat and drank with her. But at his back, he still felt the tension in the place, and was aware of the customers beginning to thin out. The night spot would be closing before long, and he still had to think of something.

"Going to sing again?" he asked.

"One more number."

Rick saw a way out. "I'll take you home," he said. If he left with the girl, the mob wouldn't try any rough stuff.

"Yes," Sheila Dawn said. "Wait for me." It was as simple as that.

From the back seat of the cab, Rick could see the car tailing them. It was black, a late-model sedan that didn't look like small-time stuff.

But then, Strang had never been small-time. Not in the prohibition days, not when he was running narcotics, not when he had shot it out with a small army of Feds and drawn life. Even in prison, he had been top dog. Three other cons had been riddled in the break—but Strang had made it. Even now, hunted like a rat, Strang was a power in his own world.

The cab drew up in front of an apartment house on a tree-lined street. Rick helped Sheila out and paid the driver. Sheila said, "Come in for a while." The invitation was artless, innocent.

In the apartment, a small, tastefully decorated flat on the third floor front, Rick went to the window and looked out while Sheila took off her coat. The sedan had drawn up on the opposite kerb. Rick could make out the shapes of four men sitting inside, waiting.

Rick found himself getting the jitters. If there was a back exit, that would be covered, too. He was stuck here. He hoped fervently that his charm would keep working. Luckily with Sheila, he wouldn't have to put on an act.

Sheila had gone into the little kitchen, and came out with a couple of drinks she had mixed. She handed one to him. "A nightcap."

Rick took the glass. Then he reached out and took the other one from her hand. He set them down on the table at his knees. Sheila stood looking at him, her lips parted. Rick stepped forward and crushed them under his.

There was a roaring in Rick's blood, and then they broke apart. For another moment they clung to each other fiercely.

All at once, the reaction hit Rick. All the day's furious activity, the tension, the beating in the alley, left him abruptly weak and exhausted. He felt his knees buckle slightly under him.

Sheila sensed it. "Oh—you're tired!"

Rick nodded. "Yeah. Sort of. I'll be okay in a minute."

She led him to a divan and made him stretch out. Then she sat by him while she loosened his tie and brushed her fingers over his hair. Rick let himself relax completely for the first time that day.

He let his eyelids drop, and through the slit of the lids, watched Sheila's face bent over him, her hair falling loose on each side.

"It's funny," Sheila said. "I don't even know your name."

He thought it over for a minute. For some reason, he wanted her to know his right one. He didn't see how it could do any harm.

"Rick—for Richard. Rick Myron."

"Rick," she murmured. She leaned over and put her face against his. Rick was stirred. He had never met a girl so lacking in coyness or pretence.

He touched her hair. The knowledge of the men waiting outside was like a bad memory, something in another world. He let his eyelids drop the rest of the way, and fell into blackness.

RICK felt the sunlight hot on his eyelids, and opened them. He looked around, groggy. It took him a few seconds to realise he was still in Sheila Dawn's apartment. He sat up. Sheila had removed his shoes and drawn a blanket over him. He cast the blanket aside. He still had his coat on, and his gun was untouched.

From the small kitchen came a sound of glass rattling, and he heard Sheila humming to herself. Then she came out, carrying a tray with a coffee pot and cups. She was wearing a flowered house dress, and looked like a school girl.

"Well, good morning, dopey. I was just going to wake you. Coffee?"

Rick grinned sheepishly, and searched for his shoes. He found them and put them on. He brushed his hair straight with his hand, and took the steaming cup she held out to him.

While he drank it, he managed to glance out the window. The sedan was gone. He looked at his wrist-watch. Past nine o'clock. The boys outside had decided daylight wasn't good for them, he judged.

Rick smiled an apology. "Thanks for your hospitality. I guess I was knocked out last night. But I can't stay."

Sheila stuck out a lower lip. "Oh—I was hoping to adopt you."

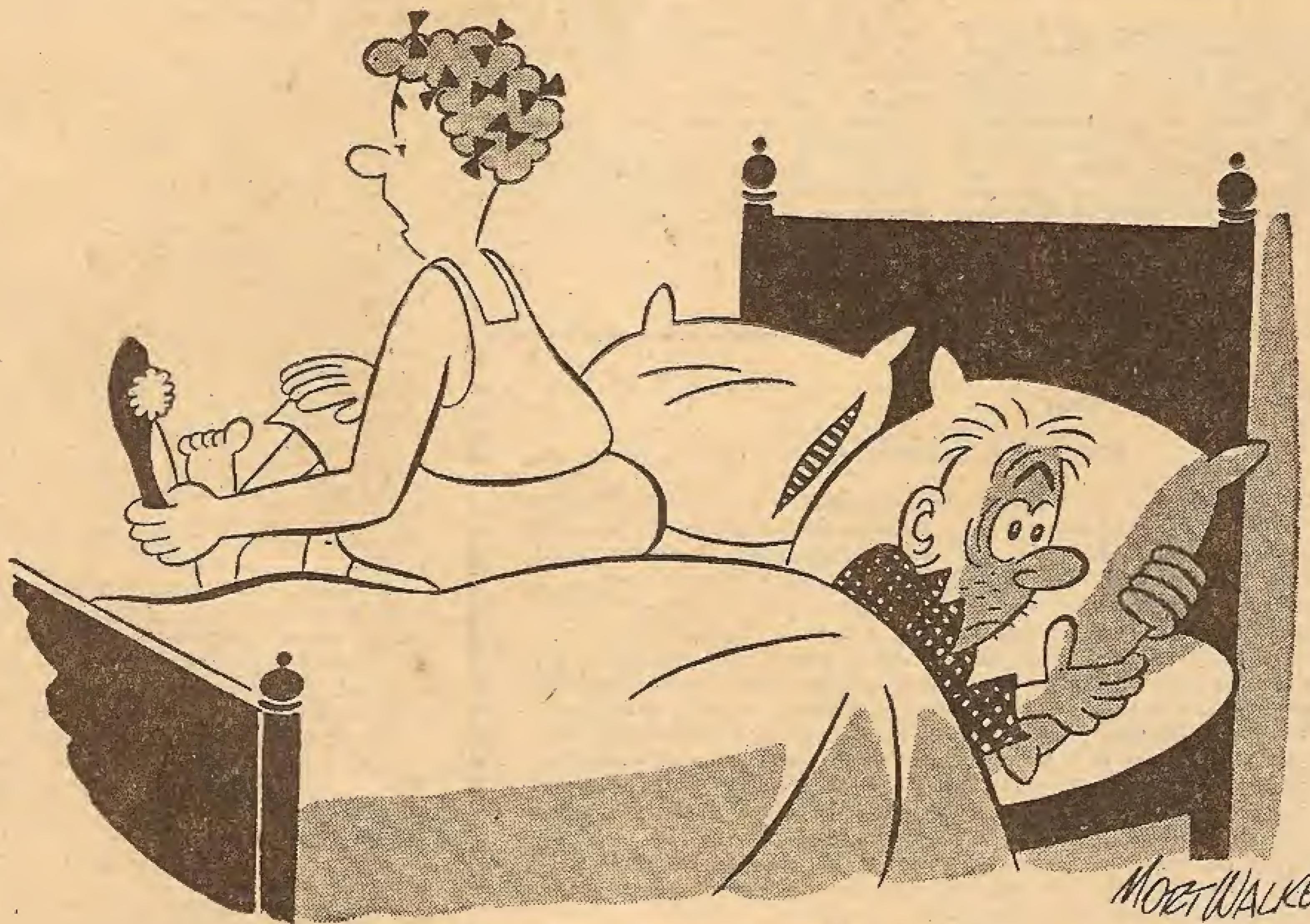
Rick was worried. He didn't have time to waste. "No fooling—I got to shove." He felt a pang of guilt when he realised he might have gotten in deeper with this girl than was good for either of them. If she was in love, it might be with a man slated to be measured for a box instead of a wedding suit. And himself—love was poison for a man playing hide-and-seek with a gang of killers. Nothing could foul things up worse than a woman on his mind.

He didn't know if he could keep Sheila off his mind—but at least he could let her out of it. He put on his hat and went to the door.

"Do you have to go?"

"If everything goes right, I'll see you at the club one of these nights. I can't tell you any more."

She came close to him. He caught her to him for a long minute, then turned and shut the door behind him. He went out feeling shaken. A man in his job had no business even thinking about women. It was going to make it tougher.



"I saved you £20 today."

He left the building the front way. Better for his plans if he was seen now. He walked quickly to the end of the block and turned the corner. Then he stepped back around and into the door of the drugstore that was there. He went inside. There was a window from which he could see the length of the street he had just come down. There was no sign of the men or their car. But he had a hunch they were still somewhere around, and if they were, he wanted to know about it. And he wanted Sheila safe.

He waited for ten minutes before he saw what he was looking for. The black sedan rolled up to where it had been parked before. He guessed they had been watching the apartment entrance from another building. He felt a hot wave of anger rising in him. If they had any ideas about bothering Sheila . . .

A big man stepped out of the back seat of the car and started across the street. Rick noticed that one sleeve hung loose. The coat was bulky at the side, as if he carried one arm bandaged to his body.

It was Strang! Strang himself. The escaped lifer, the Fed-killer.

Rick knew he was heading for Sheila's apartment. He probably thought he could force the girl to tell where Rick had gone. But she didn't know. Rick broke into a sweat when he thought what Strang might do to her.

At the same time, he felt an exultance rising in him. Strang was here, right in his grasp. He could grab him now.

He stepped back to the phone booths in the rear of the store. He got the city police chief on the line and ordered a squad car or two sent to cover him and nail the mobsters outside. He was going in after Strang himself.

Hanging up the phone, he headed for the back entrance. On the street, he flagged a cab and got in, sinking back in the seat. He had the driver pull up in front of the apartment building. Then, his hat pulled down and the cab between him and the sedan across the street, he got out and went inside the building. He was indoors before the cab pulled away.

He knew the men had not gotten a look at him.

One of them might take a notion to check on him, though. He had to move fast. He headed for the elevator and ran it up to the third floor. There he left it with the door jammed open. Anyone following him would waste minutes over that.

He ran to the door of Sheila's apartment and tried it. It was locked, automatically. Rick got the Magnum into his hand, and braced his shoulder. Then he threw his weight against the door.

It broke inward with a splintering crash, and Rick's momentum carried him stumbling into the room. In front of him, he saw Sheila staring up with a white face at Strang's huge figure looming over her.

"All right, Strang!" he barked. "This is it. Get away from the girl, and get your hand in the air. Don't try anything, because there'll be a squad car full of cops outside in about two seconds. And don't try to warn your men, or I'll blast you."

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Sheila backing away. She was obviously scared. He could imagine what Strang had been saying to her.

Strang faced him, his big features full of hate. "Well—it's the G-boy. You've got the drop on me, copper. But don't think you're gonna get me back behind bars so easy."

Rick let him talk. He was waiting for the sound of that squad car pulling up outside. "Just don't try anything, Strang. Because this time, I won't wing you. They teach us to shoot straight, you know."

Sheila had backed clear out of the line of fire now, and Rick breathed easier.

Strang said, "I'm not through yet—you'll find that out."

Rick said, "The game's up, Strang."

Sheila was leaning against a dresser. Suddenly, her voice cut in, low and husky, "Oh, no, it isn't, G-stuff. Drop your gun and get your own hands in the air."

Rick made a half-turn toward her and stared. From out of the dresser drawer, Sheila had snaked a black .38 automatic, its snout as ugly and deadly as a copperhead's. She had it pointed straight at Rick.

For a second, shock and surprise held Rick rigid. Then he started to lower his gun arm.

But instead of dropping the gun, he ducked his whole body and made a dive for the girl. Her .38 went off wildly. Then Rick was grappling for her legs. If he could pull her down between him and Strang . . . It was as though a bucket of ice water had washed all feeling for her out of him.

There was a crashing explosion in the direction of Strang, and Rick felt a bullet hit him like a mule kick. It knocked him down onto his side, away from the girl. He struggled to get his gun up, to shoot back at Strang.

The world went into a spin, and Rick was tugging at a ton of lead. It pulled him down, down, spinning into a bottomless whirlpool . . .

THERE was a time of delirium. A time of fever and wild dreams. Dreams in which the face of Sheila Dawn floated, now shining like the face of an angel, now twisted and changed into the mask of a witch from hell. And, finally, there was a time when Rick's senses returned to him, and he dimly became aware of his real surroundings.

The first time he consciously opened his eyes, he saw that Sheila Dawn was more than a dream. She was there, with him. She was leaning over him, bathing his face with a damp cloth. As he looked up, she met his glance, and then turned away.

Rick's head whirled. First the girl makes a play for him, then she pulls a gun on him and gets him shot, then he wakes up to find her nursing him. He didn't know whether he wanted to pull her into his arms, or strangle her.

He started to roll onto his side, then groaned. His torso was taped up, and he felt as if he had a hole in him big enough to drag a cat through.

He lay back, and stared at Sheila Dawn, moving around the room. The whole thing didn't make sense. Sheila had on a pair of riding pants, and a man's shirt.

Rick examined the interior, and discovered they were in a cabin. There was a pineboard floor, with a few rugs scattered around, and some rustic furniture. There were electric bulbs in the lamps, but outside he could hear the chugging of a power generator. He could hear water flowing, and trees—swamp sounds. He decided they were in a fishing shack, somewhere in the bayous. He saw a primitive field telephone on the table, and wondered where it led to. Nowhere that could do him any good, he decided. Beside it sat a portable battery radio. Shotguns, for birds.

Altogether, it looked like a pretty well provided little setup. Strang's place, more than likely. But in that case, what was he doing here—alive?

Sheila came back, with more damp cloths. Rick caught her wrist and held her, as she started to put one on.

"All right, baby," he said. "Give. What's it all about. What're we doing here?"

She let him hold her. "I didn't want you to die," she said. "So I brought you here."

Rick gave a coughing laugh. "Didn't want me to die? When you just did your best to get me killed?"

Is hard exercise . . . good for middle-age?

NO . . . much as it may distress health-faddists . . . it isn't. Middle-aged and old people must keep their exercises within the dwindling capacity of their hearts and blood-circulation. Their tissues could do with more oxygen; but to get it by really vigorous exercise is more than their frames can stand. Is there any way out of this dilemma? Well, "The British Medical Journal" suggests one. Take exercise in your bath, is its advice. After all, a man weighing ten stone weighs only 10lb. when immersed in water. This is why muscular movements under water use up much less energy and involve much less strain on the pumping and circulation system. Experiments have shown that exercises in a bath can lead to just as high a consumption of oxygen as vigorous exercises on the road. On the road, however, (particularly in the case of older people), the blood rises; the pulse quickens a good deal; on the other hand, exercises in the bath can mean just as great an increased consumption of oxygen, with only a slight increase in pulse rate and no rise in the blood pressure. Indeed the blood pressure may fall.



"Oh, George! It's smaller than I'd hoped for, but larger than I'd expected!"

"I couldn't help that," Sheila said. Rick could have sworn she looked as innocent as a baby. "You see, I didn't have any idea—before—that you were a G-man. Not until my father told me."

Whirling lights burst over Rick. "Your father!"

"Yes. My real name's Sheila Strang. Now do you understand?"

Rick slowly closed his mouth. Yeah, that did make sense. That explained why Strang was hanging around the *Vieux Carré*. And why Sheila might have needed money, all of a sudden. Rick felt a quick sense of shamed respect for the girl. She and the old man must have been pretty close.

Sheila went on. "You can see why I had to help him get away. I couldn't stand the thought of him going back to spend the rest of his life in prison. He's got so few years left—"

Rick loosened his grip on her wrist, and ended by crushing her hand in his own.

"Sure. But you know he's a criminal? He'll have to go back. They'll catch him—or kill him."

"I know. But he's the only father I've got."

"What happened at the apartment?"

"The squad car came just as Dad was getting away. He and his men shot it out with them. Two of the police were killed. I'm—sorry about that."

"He's hiding out, here in the swamp, too?"

Sheila nodded. "But they won't find him."

Suddenly, Rick knew where that field telephone went to. Another cabin, across the bayou—probably a hunting cabin, stocked with shot-guns and more lethal armory. A dangerous place to jump. Strang and his mob, the ones that were in as deep as he was, would be holed up there.

His own part in this still wasn't clear to him.

"And just to make sure they won't find him, you brought me here, right?" He was bitter again, now. "The cops are probably squatting all around the bayou. But if they come in, you finish me off, is that it?"

Sheila looked shocked. "To Rick, the expression seemed genuine. "Oh, no! No, Rick, I want you alive!" She put her head on his chest, easily so as not to hurt him.

"When my father got away from the apartment, he left you there on the floor. I had to get away, too, because I'd been helping him. I was guilty of that. But the police were after Dad, and I had time to get you out, too. I brought you here, myself. Dad and the others don't know anything about it.

"Rick, I saved your life. I took you to a doctor I know, and he got the bullet out. Then I took care of you. You would have died if I hadn't!"

"Why didn't you let me? I'm a G-man."

Sheila moaned and gripped Rick with her arm. "Oh, Rick, please. Forget about all this—this manhunt. Let the others do what they have to. Neither of us can do anything more, now. Wait until the whole thing is over. Then we—you and I—can go somewhere. Live as if it had never happened."

What Sheila said rang true. There was little either of them could do to change the outcome now. Rick felt a wave of hunger for her rushing over him. After all, he couldn't blame her for her father's crimes. And her loyalty to him was a thing Rick could not but admire. He reached and took a handful of her hair in his clenched fist. Then he pulled her mouth to his...

"Yes," Rick said. "I think we could do that."

AFTER a few hours, Rick found that he could get up and walk around, though every breath he took was like breathing flame.

Inside him, stronger than the pain of the wound, was a vast sense of relief and happiness. He'd be going back on his oath, he'd have to resign the service if he went ahead with this. But Sheila was worth it. And it wasn't wrong. People got caught up in circumstances—they couldn't always help the things that happened.

Sheila started singing as she went about the cabin. Every once in a while the thought of her father,



"Mosquitoes, ants, flies, hornets, cows . . . there can't be anything else!"

holed up like a hunted animal at bay, hit her and she sobered. But her own happiness burst through. She danced around Rick and held up her lips to be kissed, again and again.

Still, time began to drag. Out in the swamp, the silence was ominous. It became dark, and there was no sound of life anywhere around them. Rick switched on the portable radio.

A newscaster's voice poured from the speaker, smooth and meaningless.

"Police have sealed off all roads going to or from the bayou. They are convinced that Big Jim Strang and his men are in there, somewhere. For three days they have waited patiently for Strang to crack and come out of his own accord. But word is received that if Strang has not given himself up by dawn tomorrow, the entire force will start through the swamp, combing every backwater, every clump of trees. It is known that Strang's men are armed, but the Governor has said that criminals of his stamp cannot be allowed to roam at large. Even though good men must risk their lives, Big Jim Strang must be captured. The Governor said—"

Rick snapped the radio off. The Governor was a damned fool. He wished those two city cops had not gotten themselves killed—dragging in all the local law in the area. Strang's men would kill twice their number before they gave up.

But that, Rick realised, was his fault. It had been he who had called the squad car. It was his fault those cops died.

"Sheila," he said.

She came close to him. "Yes?"

Rick held her away. "It's no good. Your scheme, I can't buy it."

Sheila's face went white. "Why? Rick, why?"

"You heard the radio. That guy said a hundred cops are going to start through here in the morning. Your dad's got guns. Some of those men'll be killed, Sheila. And two have already been killed."

"Rick!" Sheila cried. "There's nothing you can do!"

"Yes, there is. I can hunt out Strang myself. Maybe I can get the drop on him. That's a long chance. If not, if there are any shots, the position will be given away, and the cops can pinpoint the place."

Sheila relaxed slightly, though her face was still anguished. "You'll never be able to find them, Rick. You'll wander around in the swamp all night. No. Stay here, Rick." Her voice was a plea.

"I can find them," he said. "That field telephone. My guess is the wire leads straight to where your dad is hiding out. All I have to do is follow it."

Sheila spun around and stared at the telephone as though it were a buzzing rattler. Rick could tell by her expression that he had hit home.

Rick went to the wall and took down a shotgun which hung there on pegs. There were shells, and he picked them up and shoved a couple into the breech.

"So, goodbye, Sheila." He started toward the door, the shotgun almost too heavy for his weakened body to carry.

Sheila suddenly darted to where the .38 automatic lay on a table. She grabbed it and whirled on him, once more covering him with it.

"Don't step into that door. If you do, this time I'll shoot straight." She gasped the words, as though they were torn out of her. Rick continued toward the door.

"And draw all the cops in three counties?" he said. "Remember, they can trace that telephone wire as easy as I could. Easier."

For a moment, Sheila looked stymied. Then the answer occurred to her.

"Then what's to stop me picking up the phone? I can call, and they could get here and blow you to pieces before you got a hundred

land. Crouching down in the brush, Rick peered intently across the narrow channel. He looked for the phone wire, and could see it strung across from one side of the channel to the other, on trees. If Strang was over there, he was within easy shotgun range — either way. Luckily, it was dark enough to give him a chance.

Rick crept down the beach toward the landing, trying to keep in the deeper shadows. Once arrived at the landing, he got down and crawled along it toward the boat at the other end, trying to keep from making himself a target. Getting into the boat and getting it started before they spotted him was his only chance.

He reached the end of the float and looked over. The boat bumped gently against the logs where it was tied. He eased forward and started to inch over the edge.

Just then, there was a sputtering roar right beneath him. The boat's motor had started!

Rick drew back involuntarily in surprise. Suddenly, from the other side of the channel, a couple of searchlights sprang to life. They swept over the water and focused on the small boat.

At the same moment, a figure stood up in the boat, exposing itself to the full glare. Lying prone on the float, Rick saw that it was Sheila, dressed in the riding pants, and her hair pulled up under a man's hat.

From across the water, a tommygun opened up. Rick saw Sheila's body jump as the slugs tore into her. Then she crumpled into the bottom of the boat.

The searchlights cut off, and Rick heard engines starting up across the channel. A pair of boats came nosing out into the clear, then. Rick saw a huge bulk looming in the prow of one. Strang.

Rick gripped the shotgun and said, "Strang!"

Big Jim Strang turned, swinging the tommygun upward. Rick fired. The shotgun blast took Strang full in the chest. He toppled slowly, and fell into the water with a splash. He floated there.

The other men in the boats moved nervously. Rick stood up and swung the shotgun over them.

Then he heard the sirens of the police boats. In half a minute, the State patrol had swung in.

Rick had got Sheila's shattered body up on to the float, and knelt down by her, holding her head up with his arm.

"Sheila — you crazy kid!" he whispered. "What were you doing?"

She found his hand, and somehow managed a smile.

"I'm always saving your life — aren't I, Rick?"

"Sheila!" He couldn't think of anything to say. "Why? Why did you?"

"It's all right. My father was a wrong guy. You were a right one, that's why. I was a wrong one, too, for not seeing things straight before. So it's all right. I just — I just wish things could have been different, Rick —"

Her body slumped in his arms and became a lifeless weight. As he held her like that, Rick Myron found himself, too, wishing desperately that things could have been different.

Well, grammarians...

what is "polydactylism"?

NO, you're wrong; it isn't what you think it is at all. "Polydactylism" is the word used to indicate that any person possesses an abnormal number of fingers and toes. Perhaps one of the most amazing examples was discovered in a Georgia (US) family in 1945. The mother (who had 12 fingers) had inherited this condition from her father and had transmitted it to five of her eight children. At the time, these six members of the family had 18 additional normal digits which consisted of eleven fingers and seven toes. And the range was from one extra toe on the eldest son (then aged 17) to two extra toes and three extra fingers on the youngest daughter (five-year-old).

yards. And they'd get away before any cops got near here."

Rick knew she had him. If Strang came looking for him, he wouldn't have a ghost's chance of coming out alive. He couldn't wreck the phone because he knew she would use the automatic on him if he tried it.

The two dead cops decided him. "All right, use the phone. But tell Strang I'll get him if I can."

He stepped through the door and outside. He headed for the brush, and plunged in. Through the open door, he could see her picking up the phone.

Rick soon saw why Sheila was so sure Strang could nail him. The cabin was on an island. It would take a boat to get off it. Rick worked his way around the rim of the island for half an hour, before he was convinced there was only one boat-landing—the one near the cabin. He had hoped he could get away on land, but he was forced to return to where the boat — a small power launch — was tied up.

In the time he had spent exploring, Strang could have gotten a dozen boats through the swamp to the is-

FUGITIVE ON HELL ISLAND

* By ROBERT C. DENNIS

THE MAN WITH THE GUN ADVISED—"WHY PAY FOR WHAT'S NOT YOURS? THERE'S A TIME TO TALK. MAYBE IT'S NOW."

THE street dead-ended on the river, and Gaynor had stepped off into a muddy, unpaved road before he realised it. Through the mist that was more than half fog he saw a nebulous pinpoint of light somewhere on the far shore. That put the island a little to the north, Gaynor reasoned. He moved back on to the kerb and stared with brooding eyes the length of the darkened waterfront street. Except for a tavern in the middle of the block the little town seemed to have gone to bed.

Gaynor shivered deep within himself. There was no defence against this slow crumbling of his carefully nurtured egotism. There was only bitter, helpless anger. But he'd be all right when he got back to the bright lights.

Impatiently, his eyes searched the desolate street for a sign of Cooney. No sound, no movement. Gaynor swore futilely. Hunching a little, he walked rapidly toward the tavern. If the little stoolie had sought shelter from the rain it would have to be there. The peeling letters on the window read, *Nick's*.

Gaynor halted just inside the door, letting the smell of stale beer fill his nostrils. In the dreary light of the room he examined the customers, two pipe-smoking old men in overcoats, playing cards at one of the back tables. But no Cooney.

Then Gaynor glanced at the bartender. He was the biggest man Gaynor had ever seen. Standing at least six-four he was built in proportion; enormous in the shoulders and stomach, a massive head, and hands that could have crushed the bottle of beer he held. Gaynor pegged his weight on the far side of three hundred.

"Beer," Gaynor ordered, resting his elbows on the bar.

The big man silently set up a bottle and glass. Gaynor drank from the bottle; he thought it more antiseptic. The glass looked as if it had not been washed recently.

"How do I get to the Island?" Gaynor asked abruptly, pitching his voice so only the bartender would hear it.

"Ferry. In the morning."

"Tonight," Gaynor said.

The bartender looked at him phlegmatically. "Not tonight. The ferry runs to Canada, too. No customs after seven o'clock. No ferry."

"Any rowboats for rent?"

The bartender tipped up his bottle, let half the contents run down his throat. "In the morning," he said again. "Nobody goes over to the Island at night. Nothin' but some rundown farms over there."

"The weather slowed up the bus," Gaynor explained. "I should have been here two hours ago."

The big man said nothing. He brought up a bottle of whisky from under the bar, and two clean glasses. He glanced at Gaynor briefly, poured out two shots. His mammoth hand concealed the label on the bottle. He put the bottle out of sight again.

"Wash the fog out of your soul," he said, nodding.

Gaynor picked up his glass. It smelt okay, so he drank, the big man watching him. "When is the next bus through here, east?"

"In the morning," Nick said once more, patiently. "Seven."

Gaynor nodded, backed away from the bar. The man's impassivity aggravated the frustration in his chest. He couldn't leave without Edgerton. He'd have to make that early bus or blow up inside. Damn Cooney!

OUTSIDE a car splashed through the puddles on the muddy road, tossing a sheet of water at Gaynor's legs. He waited till it had turned the corner toward the centre of town, then he crossed the road and slid down the greasy mudbank. From there it was less than six feet to the edge of the river.

The Island would be upstream of the town, Gaynor reasoned, north of the pinprick of light on the Canadian side. He worked his way along the shore, till he came to a small homemade dock jutting out into the river, and beyond that a boathouse.

The door was locked on the inside. Gaynor edged out on the narrow dock till he could see the other end of the boathouse. There the double doors seemed slightly ajar.

Doggedly he sat down on the dock, removed his shoes and socks and rolled up his trousers. The icy water seized his ankles. His feet went almost instantly numb. He waded, knee-deep, around the corner of the boathouse. A large iron cylinder was fitted on to the sloping ramp for rolling a boat inside. Gaynor stepped over the roller, crowding the double doors back.

There was no boat. With the doors left open, there wouldn't be, Gaynor thought. He felt his way forward toward the locked door. He didn't want any more wading. His head cracked into something sharp and immovable, knocking his hat off and battering his temple. He reached up, running his hands along the

The tiny gun slid out of Gaynor's sleeve. He had no choice. He tried for Edgerton's shoulder, then fired again and again.





smooth curved bottom of a canoe slung from the low rafters.

"Ah," Gaynor breathed, and fumbled out his lighter. In the wavering flame he considered his find. It was no prize. Smack in the middle, at the waterline, was a jagged rent large enough to fit his head. In any event there were no paddles.

Gaynor bent to recover his hat. He froze that way, doubled over.

The man lay on his side, face to the wall. He had been there some time, for the clothes were damp but not quite wet. Squatting Gaynor rolled him over on his back.

In the lighter flame, blood glistened on the chest, high up. A knife had been used and it had broken off. The handle was missing, but the blade was there, wedged between two of Cooney's ribs. The little stoolie was quite dead.

Gaynor snapped off his lighter. The whole deal was bursting its seams. Edgerton would fight. Nobody had foreseen that. The man was boxed and his desperation showed up the extremity of his plight. They had found him a hideaway, but that was all. The rest was his. Caught, he would stand it alone; from here in it was Edgerton's baby. Always the little fellow, Gaynor thought with tired rage. Now I'll have to nail him.

Gaynor found his hat and went out the way he had come. The water wasn't cold any longer. He put on his shoes and socks, speeding all his movements now. A hundred feet further on through the dripping night he came to another jutting dock, this one complete with boat.

A padlocked chain moored the boat to a sturdy piling. Gaynor tested the lock. A rock might do it.

He'd just returned with one when the beam of a flashlight sprayed over him.

Behind the flashlight a girl's voice said, "What do you think you're doing there?"

"I was going to borrow your boat," Gaynor admitted.

"To go fishing, I suppose!"

"No," Gaynor said stolidly. "To go over to the Island."

"Tonight?" Uncertainty crept in under the crisp resourcefulness of her voice. "There's nothing over there." She gestured with a hand that glinted in the watered glow of the flashlight. "Walk ahead of me toward the house."

It was just a little gun. A woman's gun. But all guns were made to kill.

GAYNOR entered an unlighted screened porch and halted there. It was an ordinary summer cottage, battened up for cold weather. "What are you going to do?" he asked.

"Call the law," she said, staying warily at a distance.

"I'm the law."

She puzzled over that. "I don't believe it," she said finally.

Gaynor undid the belt of his trenchcoat, the girl keeping an alert watch. He took out his billfold, showed his credentials.

"Special Investigator," she read, furrowing her brow. "What are you doing here? Why do you want to go to the Island?"

Gaynor didn't answer.

"If you're telling the truth I'll lend you my boat," she persisted. "So far, you aren't very convincing."

Gaynor had to be on that seven o'clock bus. "There's a man hiding out over there. He's wanted in the city. I'm going to arrest him."

"Why?" she demanded. "What has he done?"

She had not asked who. It might be significant and it might not. Gaynor simply noticed things like that. "He's one of the contractors constructing that new freeway across town."

"I know," she interrupted. "I've seen them working on it. It will cost ten million dollars, they say."

Gaynor said in a tired voice, "When it is finished it'll be a nine-million-dollar job. Maybe eight. Edgerton knows where the difference will go."

to get a look at her. Under her determined resourcefulness, she was quite young. Her raincoat might have been fresh from a college football game; she wore neat white rubber boots. A bright handkerchief was tied over yellow hair. Not twenty, Gaynor thought.

Alone, Gaynor picked up the gun from the table. It was very small and compact and the safety catch was off. She knew that much. And she was young enough to have been nervous. Bleakly, he put the gun into his pocket.

When the girl returned, he followed her silently down the slippery path to the boat. A long way away a boat whistle fretted against the confining fog.

"Want me to row?" Gaynor asked. "Just try not to fall overboard," she said briefly.

SHE rowed with deft, experienced strokes, angling a little upstream, compensating for the steady sweep of the current. The Island was indistinguishable against the inky blackness of the Canadian shore. There were no lights. She said, without missing a beat of her oars:

"How are you going to find this man? There're at least five farms over there."

"There'll be a rowboat," Gaynor said. "That might help."

"Everybody will be asleep," she persisted. "It's after eleven. People go to bed early here."

"I know," Gaynor said stolidly. "I grew up in a small town." Not really; he hadn't grown up, he'd just grown a few years older. At ten he'd planned to run away. At sixteen the will to try had been knocked out of him. They'd done a job on him in those six years, his uncle, mostly, but the whole town too.

The marks were still there, inside. Now he had to be on that seven o'clock bus.

The tip-off was a rowboat beached on the narrow shore. It was the only one. The girl paddled silently in close. The dripping trees growing almost to the water's edge hung above them, evil with darkness. A path twisted back through the trees, and in their depth a pale light flickered in a window.

Gaynor said, "Stay here. If there's any trouble get out fast. Don't wait for me."

She didn't reply. When he was halfway to the house he sensed that she was following, but he didn't go back.

The light was in the kitchen. Gaynor could make out two men and a slatternly woman playing cards on the kitchen table. A kerosene lamp shed an inadequate yellow glow on the worn oilcloth. Gaynor took out his gun.

Then he remembered the girl's tiny weapon. For a moment he considered it; finally, rolling his shirt cuff, he slid the gun down the left sleeve of his trenchcoat until it was held by the cuff. By hooking his thumb in the belt of the coat he could feel the hard outline against his ribs. He didn't expect real trouble but he was always ready. He would live longer that way.

Cooney had not been ready.

The back door was unlocked. Gaynor stepped inside so quietly that they didn't hear him till they saw him. He stopped motionless for the space



"I don't remember saying good-night."



"That's the very bench where I met Tommy . . . and sure enough, there's Tommy."

of a second, letting them see the gun in his hand. The soft whisper of the dripping countryside was the substance of the silence in that dingy, farm kitchen.

"It's a pinch, Edgerton," Gaynor said, his lips moving over clamped teeth. "Don't make it tough for yourself."

Very carefully Edgerton put both hands on top of the table. His eyes slid from side to side, fixed on Gaynor. Except for his shifting eyes he might have resembled a plump little school teacher.

"What for, copper?"

"The freeway business," Gaynor said stolidly. "It isn't yours. Why pay for it? There's a time to talk. Maybe it's now."

"Yes," Edgerton said, his eyes alert now, his voice singsong. "It's time to talk of many things—of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages—and kings. Take your choice, copper."

"I'll take the kings," Gaynor said. "One named Kenfield."

"Kings come high." His eyes were bright. "Very high."

"You won't lose anything. It's Kenfield we want."

There was a noise at the door. Gaynor looked around carefully. The girl stood there, wide-eyed, the bright handkerchief pushed back off her yellow hair. Edgerton came slowly to his feet.

"Anna—" his eyes shifted sideways again at Gaynor.

"I brought him over," she said. "He made accusations against my

father. I had to know the truth. Is my father swindling the city on the freeway?"

Gaynor could read the man's mind working out the chances. The girl couldn't; she was too young, too anxious. "Tell me the truth. Is he?"

"No, Anna," Edgerton said, softly. "It isn't true. They're trying to frame your daddy for political reasons. Some of my workmen were careless. They tried to use it to get to Russell."

"You spoke a pretty piece," Gaynor said. "Maybe the king will buy you an air-conditioned cell for a couple of years." He didn't look at Anna Kenfield. Someone had had to arrange details of Edgerton's stay on the Island; Kenfield's daughter had been the one. It put a sour coating on Gaynor's palate.

There was still Cooney. Edgerton would break on that. But not here; not where he could grandstand his loyalty in front of Kenfield's daughter.

GAYNOR motioned Edgerton away from the table. The farmer and his wife looked on with scared, dull eyes while Gaynor fanned his quarry for a weapon. No gun; no knife.

"There's a bus at seven," he said. "We'll be on it." He pushed Edgerton to the door.

The man went so far, then stopped. Gaynor nudged him with the gun. Edgerton stepped backwards into the gun, freezing it there. Over his shoulder, Nick, the big bartender,

made a target in the doorway that Gaynor could have hit blindfolded if the gun had been free. The bartender had an oversized, old-fashioned horse pistol in his hand. On him, it didn't look so large.

"No trouble, mister," he said, reasonably. "Too many people could get hurt."

One of the overcoated old men from the tavern scurried around behind Gaynor and snatched at the gun. Gaynor let it go. The big man was right. Too many people could get hurt.

The farmer's wife was sobbing. Anna Kenfield had backed into a corner, very young and unsure.

"I tried to tell you, mister," the big man sounded hurt. "In the morning, I kept telling you. You should have listened."

"Put a tag on it, chump," Gaynor said unpleasantly. "What can you do for Kenfield?"

"The name is Nick Jasunas, mister," the big man told him. "But chump too, I guess," he conceded. "Maybe we all are one time or another. You've met Miss Kenfield here?"

Gaynor kept his gaze away from the girl. "We've met," he agreed. "She gave me a boat ride." His tone was bitter.

Anna Kenfield made a slight protesting noise, a little girl sound.

"Does her father own you, too?" Gaynor demanded.

"Nobody owns me, mister," Nick Jasunas said. "Independent, that's how I am. When I need protection, I do it myself. Like now."

"What kind of protection?" Gaynor said impatiently.

"I got to get what I pay for, is all. Mr. Edgerton has nine hundred dollars of mine. A man has a right to expect something for nine hundred dollars, hasn't he?"

Gaynor's nod conceded the point. "What?"

"Whisky," Jasunas stated. "Good Canadian whisky. Nine hundred dollars worth."

"I haven't got it," Edgerton said quickly. "I've already paid for the stuff. I was going to bring it in late tonight."

"You see?" Jasunas spread his huge hands. "He can't be two places."

"He'll be on the seven o'clock bus," Gaynor put it flatly.

Jasunas' big face wore a hurt expression. "Not tonight. In the morning, maybe. Things will look brighter for everybody in the morning."

"If there's any way we can get out of town sooner than seven," Gaynor's voice was implacable, "we'll take it." A little ripple of anger passed through him. "You're crying about nine hundred dollars! The taxpayers in the city stand to drop a million or two."

Jasunas looked unimpressed. "There ain't much difference actually. I lose my money, everything goes." He gestured at his great, shapeless body. "What can I do with that—crawl under cars? These hands, will they handle a pick and shovel? Anybody need a three hundred and twenty pound clerk? No, mister, the taxpayers can afford it better. Let them *p v*!"

Ed Gaynor said dully. "Who pays for murder?"

THE walls of the room caught the words and echoed them back into the absolute emptiness of sound. Then the voice of the rain pushed into the foreground, Anna Kenfield's gasp, and the farm woman's frightened cry flowed into the space. Edgerton's face was sickly white, his legs seemed to go rubbery. He sat down in his chair with a little crash.

The gaunt farmer shook himself. "We ain't havin' no part of murder. We don't know nothin'."

"Murder is a wicked calling," Jasunas said carefully. "Who would you be meaning?"

"The little man," Gaynor said mockingly. "He was in your joint early tonight. I came too late. You said so yourself. Edgerton got to him first. You gave me some good Canadian whisky because you knew I was going to need it!"

"Not for that," Jasunas denied. "I didn't know it was murder. I thought he was playing both sides of the street. When he first come asking his questions two-three days ago I pegged him for a stoolie. I figured the cops had paid off for the tip and he was trying to get another cut from Edgerton here. I pick up a few pennies offa Canadian liquor, but I don't hold with murder, mister. I won't stand in your way."

It dropped it back on Edgerton. The man lunged off his chair, aiming his charge at the old man holding Gaynor's gun. He made it. Nobody had foreseen his move. Just like with Cooney. The scuffle was too brief for interference. From the way the old man cried out as the gun was wrenched from his hand, the finger caught in the trigger guard must have snapped. Edgerton had the gun; he laughed.

"That cannon of yours won't shooot, Nick. I saw it lying around your back room often enough to know."

"We ain't in this," the farmer's wife cried. "He's just a boarder. We didn't know he was smugglin' those nights he was out with the boat. He tole us he liked to recite po'try out loud and wanted to be alone. We don't know nuthin' else."

Edgerton chuckled again, hopped up with his victory. He recited in his sing-song voice, "Sigh no more, ladies. Sigh no more. Men were deceivers ever. One foot in sea and one on shore. To one thing constant never." He couldn't control his bubbling laughter. It trickled out with his words. "Running whisky was a little out of my line, but it was better than just sitting around. Made a little money, too!"

Gaynor looked at Anna Kenfield. Her eyes were too big, too dark for her pinched white face. She was very young to have to learn that the world was a wicked place. But Gaynor had been younger . . .

Edgerton followed his glance. "Your old man makes mistakes, too. That stoolie followed your scent, not mine. Somebody else should have been sent."

He swung on Gaynor. "Tonight wasn't as untidy as it looked. The body would be in the river now except this stump-jumper was waiting for me right outside the boathouse. That cramped the act."

Gaynor said, "Somebody has to pay for it. If you call the turn on

Kenfield, you might beat the chair."

Edgerton laughed heartily, triumphantly. "When I blow this time there won't be a trail for your stoolies. Kenfield—I want him where he is now. He's worth a lot to me. For what is worth in anything. But so much money as 'twill bring."

He cut it off, his voice hardening. The schoolteacher look had vanished. "My clothes are upstairs. I'll take Anna up with me. Any trouble, she goes first. You wouldn't like that, would you, copper? Such a pretty girl! You'd get sweet on her if you had the nerve, wouldn't you? It shows all over your face!"

Maybe a woman could build up what others had torn down. Gaynor thought. Maybe a man could be sure of himself if he was important to someone else. That could do it.

EDGERTON sidestepped toward her. Once he got her in front of him it would be all over. The tiny gun slid out of Gaynor's sleeve. He had no choice. He tried for Edgerton's shoulder.

The gun was too light. Edgerton took it in the chest, but it didn't have enough force behind it. He swung Gaynor's bigger, heavier gun around, ready to throw lead all over the kitchen. Too many people were going to get hurt.

Gaynor fired again. Then, as Edgerton still held his feet, he went a little wild, pulling the trigger frantically, emptying every shot into the man's body. The last one caught him in the throat. He was dead before he slumped to the dirty kitchen floor.

Gaynor's reason came back. There was no regret in him for the killing. The knife blade still in Cooney's body equalised that. It was simply the futility of it; always the little man. To the big bartender he said stolidly, "I think he was just playing for support. Your nine hundred is still on him. Help yourself."

His eyes on the dead man, Nick Jasunas crossed himself. "I don't rob the dead, mister. If it's coming to me, let the cops send it back." He turned and plodded outside, the overcoated old man scurrying after him, still nursing his broken finger.

Gaynor turned to look at the girl. Her father was clear now. There was no one to testify against him. Maybe that was the price Gaynor had to pay for what he wanted from her. She came slowly out of her corner. "Where are his things?"

"Just his clothes," muttered the farmer. "Upstairs. We'll turn 'em over to the constable tomorrow."

She held her face rigid against emotion, but it was a grown-up, adult face. "The suit-case with the books," she said steadily. "You won't blackmail my father if that's what you're hoping. Go and get them."

The farmer went sullenly out of the room.

She turned to Gaynor. "I saw them when I rowed him over here a month ago. All of the company records. Edgerton was expected to burn them, I suppose. They incriminate my father—he was going to see that."

Gaynor said nothing; he waited.

"He adopted me when I was a baby." She was crying soundlessly,

but only the tears sliding down her set white face betrayed her. "He's just like my own father—nobody knows how good he was to me."

She'd had that much, Gaynor thought. That was the difference. Gaynor's uncle had never stopped resenting the demand on him. He'd done a job in those six years. A psychologist might have made something from the compulsion that had brought Gaynor to the police force.

The farmer came in with the suit-case of records, dumping it roughly on the oilcloth-covered table. His eyes were murderous with frustration.

Gaynor didn't look around. "Why?" he asked the girl. "Why?"

"I have no choice!" she said fiercely. "I'd be guilty, too. Inside! I owe my father everything else, except that. But a person's responsible for his own soul!"

Gaynor put a big flat hand on her shoulder. She jerked away from him. "Don't touch me! You've got what you want, isn't that enough? It's a job well done. Take it and go away from here. Use the other boat. I'll get home."

Gaynor stared for a moment at her tense young back. Dimly he sensed that even in this she was helping him. Some of his burning rage against injustice and inhumanity began to die. Russell Kenfield was a symbol, like Gaynor's uncle had been, of tyranny. By tearing the one from his throne it would compensate in part for the cruelty of the other. But Edgerton was right; kings come high. Gaynor picked up the suitcase, and walked out into the drizzling night.

The rest he would have to do himself. He was responsible for his own soul. He began to run. He wouldn't wait for the bus; somebody would give him a ride. When morning came he'd be a long way away and everything would be brighter then. He knew it would.

"In the morning," he repeated aloud the words jarring out unevenly. "Sure, in the morning . . ."



"That's what I forgot—a bolt for the door hinge!"



THEY REALLY RIDE SHANKS' PONY

The twenty-six miles of the Olympic Marathon has produced a fine crop of characters—and a fine crop of stories about them as well.

SPORT • FACT

★ **By FRANK BROWNE**

THE twenty-six odd miles of the Marathon distance have produced more unusual stories—and more characters—than any other event on the Olympic calendar. Perhaps that's because in the first place you have to have a little bit of eccentricity about you to want to blister your feet running that far.

It takes a fearsome quantity of stamina, combined with legs that won't cramp, plus speed, if the fate of the first Marathon is to be avoided. This was Pheidippides, who ran from the little village of Marathon to Athens with the news of the Persian defeat in 490 BC and died as he shouted "Rejoice, we conquer!"

The story of the 1896 Marathon reads like a fairy tale. A shepherd, Spiridon Loues, a visionary, and (truth to tell, in the minds of his

friends) a little off the beam but a tireless runner, entered the race as a sort of religious duty rather than in a desire to achieve athletic glory. He saw himself running home at the head of the field and recreating the glory that was Greece.

By the time that the Marathon, the last event at the revived Olympic Games, was due for decision, it was apparent that something was needed to revive Greek athletic glory. The hosts at Athens had not won, or looked like winning, an event. The Marathon was the last hope.

Down from the hills, in long trousers and a sheepskin vest, came Loues. As the field went to the mark he told the starter that he wanted to run. It was as easy as that. There were no entry forms at the Athens Games in 1896. You merely put your

name in and there you were. Which was just as well for Spiridon, who was a little bit light on the reading and writing front.

Away they went. Frenchman Lemursiaux went into the lead, where he stayed for half the distance. Through village after village, along a route patrolled by Greek cavalry, they went; couriers from various points dashed on horseback to the Stadium in Athens to announce progress.

There was nothing about the progress reports to make the Greeks happy. In fact, there was much diving under the seats for bottles of ouzo to keep up the spirits when at eighteen miles it was announced that Arthur Blake (of America) had taken the lead.

Then, with seven kilos to go, Spiridon Loues went to the front. The roar that this brought was probably heard across the sea in Asia Minor.

After a while a stocky, wiry frame trotted through the entrance to the Stadium and commenced the final circuit of the track. The giant princes of Greece—Prince George and Prince Constantine—left the royal box and, amid howls of patriotic fervor, trotted one on either side of the winner to the finish line.

Greece went mad. Loues was offered free meals and free haircuts for life . . . and no doubt the choice of many other pleasures. He refused them all and headed back for the hills.

But the Marathon had unquestionably been the glamor event at Athens.

At Paris in 1900 the whole Games was something of a schemozzle and the Marathon produced more than its share of both personality and argument.

It was won by a Frenchman, one Michel Teato, who was a Parisian baker boy. It was claimed that his stamina had been developed by delivering bread at top speed through the nooks and crannies of the Parisian faubourgs.

After he won some of the disgruntled competitors reckoned that his victory was less due to his stamina than the fact that his local knowledge of the course enabled him to cut the corners and run slightly less than the distance travelled by others.

Be that as it may, he was a cheerful soul who probably felt (with Gallic logic) that a corner or two between friends wasn't worth worrying about.

At St. Louis in 1904 one of the greatest characters that the Games have ever seen made his appearance in the race. He was a Cuban named Felix Carvajal.

Felix, a postman from Havana, had heard vaguely of the Games as he pounded his beat. There is no record that he had ever run in a race before. But he decided to be up yonder in St. Louis when the roll was called . . . and that was that.

The fact that he hadn't enough money to get him out of Havana didn't deter him. He started a one-man drive for funds, which might be worth some consideration by the Australian Olympic authorities, who always seem to be short of finance.

He first of all announced his intentions to his fellow-postmen and began running a sort of weekly pool on the result of the local cock-fights. His next move was to resign his position as postman. He went to Havana's city area, where to attract attention he ran around and around the square. He then mounted a soapbox and appealed loudly for funds. He finally got enough in this way to pay his fare to St. Louis.

First step on the journey was New Orleans, town of romance and gambling. Felix got into a dice game, in which his misguided but earnest attempts to increase his capital were finally to leave him completely broke.

So he started out to walk, run or hitch-hike to St. Louis. He eventually arrived, his clothes in rags and without the proverbial cracker in his pocket to provide food and shelter.

Some of the United States field

What do you mean by . . . heart sense?

JUST this. Have a heart about that heart of yours. Sudden bursts of excessive exercise—or too little exercise and too much eating—won't do it any good. Instead, exercise regularly . . . out in the open air when possible. Avoid high tempers and nervous tension, especially if you are over 40. They can bring on high blood pressure . . . a major cause of heart disease. Check with your doctor on breathlessness, "palpitations," irregular heart-beat, vague "indigestion" pains, dizziness, swollen feet and ankles or constant fatigue. Even with heart trouble you can live a full and long life if you shun worry and excitement. And remember there are more people worried about having a bad heart than there are people with heart disease.

games team took him under their wing and provided him with food and a bed.

He went to the starting mark—to oppose thirty highly-trained athletes, in heavy boots, long ragged trousers and a shirt with long sleeves. On the mark, Martin Sheridan, crack US shot-putter, and one of his friends, snipped off the trousers at the knees, and trimmed the shirt sleeves to some semblance of a running vest.

Off they went. It was a shockingly hot day, and within a few miles, the southern heat started to tell on some of the competitors. But not on Felix. He cracked jokes with the spectators, and picked apples along the way and ate them. He grabbed two peaches from somebody in an official car and ran away with them, laughing loudly.

He jogged along tirelessly and actually finished fourth.

There seems little doubt that had he been properly trained, he would have won—and won easily.

Only fourteen starters finished the course. Of those who didn't, one collapsed eight miles from the finish and nearly died of haemorrhage of the stomach, at the roadside.

There was sensation at the finish of the race. Fred Lorz, one of the American athletes, was seized with cramp about nine miles from the finish. He decided to quit and was offered a lift in one of the new-fangled autos that were following the runners. The car broke down about five miles from the finish. Lorz—according to himself, to keep warm—started to run. He ran into the arena, where it was concluded that he had completed the course. He was accorded a great ovation.

He claimed that everybody knew that he was out of the race and that he was only having a joke. But it led to him being banned for life by the American Athletic Union.

At London in 1908, the Marathon produced yet another series of sensations. Run from Windsor Castle to Shepherds Bush, there were seventy-five entries. Long before the race there was trouble. Canada had entered an Indian, Tom Longboat, and the US had protested on the grounds that he was a pro. There was little doubt that he was a pro, but he was allowed to start. The Marathon (held on the second last day of an Olympic festival that became known as "The Battle of Shepherd's Bush," because of the number of disputes, which started even before the Games started and became steadily worse as they progressed) very nearly brought officials as well as competitors to fisticuffs.

This is how it happened. Hefernon, of South Africa, favorite for the event, led until almost in sight of the Stadium. Then, Dorando Pietri, of Italy, who in private life lived on the Isle of Capri, running in white singlet and red knickerbockers, passed him.

Pietri was running on just about guts alone. He staggered into the Stadium, turned in the wrong direction, and collapsed on the track. There were shouts of "give him a hand!" and other shouts of warning that any aid would disqualify him. The Yanks, who thought that a South African (nominally a Britisher) was running second, and being very anti-British as a result of earlier squabbles, were yelling for somebody to help Pietri along to the tape.

Then they discovered that a Yank, Hayes, was really next in line, and shouted: "Leave him lie there."

Amidst great excitement and confusion, some British officials helped Pietri to his feet and turned him in the right direction. He staggered, took a few steps and fell again. Four times he was lifted; four times he fell, until he was half-carried through the tape.

Though his gameness excited great sympathy, he had to be disqualified. But his feat was recog-

nised by Queen Alexandra, of England, who presented him with a special cup, worth twenty times as much as the Olympic medal.

AT Stockholm in 1912 the Marathon also had its big incident. It was won by Keith McArthur, a big mounted trooper from South Africa, and the first really big man (6.2 and 14 stone) ever to win the Marathon. He defeated another South African, Charlie Gitshaw. The pair had taken the lead together and jogged along talking, until the Stadium was in sight.

Afterwards, it was said that they had agreed to run in together and become dead-heaters for the title. But when the spectators strained their eyes to see who had entered the Stadium first, it was McArthur, out on his own. He trotted the last two laps... to win an easy victory. Then came Gitshaw—in a violent rage. He claimed that he stopped for a drink of water and that McArthur, instead of waiting, had gone on to run round the last few laps to victory. The two men nearly came to blows over it.

The 1920 Marathon at Antwerp was chiefly remarkable for the way in which Hannes Kolehmainen, hero of the distance events at Stockholm Games, ran away from his field to win in record time.

In 1924, another Finn, Alben Stenroos—a 40-year-older—was also a starter in the Paris Marathon. Kolehmainen, easily the best Marathon runner in the world on times, was expected to retain his title by leading home the 58 competitors.

Stenroos had an interesting history. He had been a prominent amateur wrestler, who had turned to running a few years before. He had been

The rainbow has...

how many colors?

OKAY, you escapees from the halls (and attics) of learning, the answer in the physics book is: "Seven". But cogitate. When you look (without bias or influenced by books) at the sunlight spectrum, do you really find seven colours? No, you don't! On rough examination, you will distinguish three essential color-regions (red-orange; yellow-green; and violet-blue). If you peer more attentively, you may distinguish five primitive colors (red, yellow, green, blue and violet). These have, of course, no sharp borders between them, they run gradually into one another. A much closer investigation on your part may add orange, yellow-green, blue-green and dark blue as intermediate shades—nine all told. Then how comes the seven. Well, the matter dates back some 300 years. The originator was Isaac Newton. When publishing his book, "Optics", Newton distinguished no more than five colors. He wrote: "The spectrum showed itself colored, red at the one end, violet at the other; between them the colors yellow; green and blue." Later on, however, Newton tried to bring the spectrum colors into agreement with the key-notes of the musical scale. The figure 7 was then considered almost "holy"; it had been held as of the greatest importance by medieval astrologers and alchemists (mainly, it seems, from the reasoning that as there were 7 planets, 7 basic metals and so on). Newton, therefore, seems to have determined that there must also be seven colors. And that's why seven was given for the number of colors in the rainbow... a half-truth which exists even into our own day.

dogged by bad luck—and a fractured leg in 1915, in a race fall, should have terminated his running career.

But he saddled up again. In business life, he was a sewing-machine salesman; perhaps he had to run a lot in his job. Anyway, he made short work of the big field to win with six minutes in hand.

IN 1928 at Amsterdam, the Marathon attracted no fewer than 75 runners. There were Joie Ray, of America, Yamada, of Japan, and Maltelin, of Finland, all great runners, and another ten or fifteen whose names were freely mentioned as likely winners. One not mentioned as a possibility, was a nearly-black, fuzzy-haired Algerian, called El Ouafi. A little man, he was running for France. His early history had been colorful. He had served in the 1914-18 war, and later was in the French Army of Occupation on the Rhine. Still later, he had fought in the Moroccan wars against Abd-el-Krim, as a despatch rider. For the two years previous to the Games, he had been working as a motor mechanic in Paris. There was little to recommend him as a runner, and France had selected him on the basis of his paying his own fare to Amsterdam.

The reports filtering back to the Stadium never mentioned him. He wasn't in the first fifty when half the journey had been covered nor in the first twenty at eighteen miles.

But the reports from the twenty-five mile mark had him up with the leaders, who had been Yamada, Ray and Maltelin.

He ran to the front half a mile from home and went away on his own. He won by 26 seconds, finished as fresh as a daisy and could have apparently run another Marathon without rest.

The man who ran second was also a pre-race no-hoper. This was little Miguel Plaza, a Santiago newsboy. Miguel had finished even faster than the winner. He hadn't been in the hunt with a mile to go, but cut down man after man, until he filled second place well on his own. He



Let's go in and price wedding cakes just for the heck of it.

was so overjoyed that he grabbed a Chilean flag and ran another circuit of the track, waltzing most of the way.

There was plenty of sensation attached to the Marathon at Los Angeles in 1932. Firstly, the hot favorite, none other than the ageing but apparently tireless Paava Nurmi, never got to the post. He was declared a professional by the Disputes Committee before the Games started.

Another runner also had trouble getting to the mark. This was Zabala, of Argentina. Before the Games started there was a revolt in the Argentine team and some of them were sent home. Zabala was nominated to go home also, but refused.

Zabala made no secret of the fact that he believed that the title would be his.

He set off when the gun cracked, and within five miles had run nearly 300 yards clear of the rest of the field. He maintained his advantage to the 15-mile peg, but here Virtanen, of Finland, made a run and passed him going out to a lead of nearly a minute. At twenty miles Wright, of England, running to a plan, took the lead. Zabala was now third.

At this point Zabala began to crowd on pace. He got into second place and then to the lead at twenty-three miles. Here Ferris, of England, began to go after him.

For the last two and a quarter miles it was a great struggle and Zabala was a bare forty yards in the lead as he came through the tunnel into the Stadium. Close behind Ferris were Toivenen and Wright.

Ferris made a game bid as they circled the track and then, to everybody's amazement, hot on his heels came Toivenen and Wright. For the

first time in Olympic history the first four men in the Marathon were in the Stadium at the same time! Zabala, on the point of collapse, held Ferris off to win by five seconds. Both men were nearly a minute under the existing Olympic record. Toivenen also broke the record and Wright was just outside it.

Zabala was in the field again at Berlin in 1936. He was favored to win it, but the British were pretty confident that Harper, their best distance man, would do it. Harper, a 29-year-old Sheffield miner, was a really good runner who could go all day. Nobody knew much about two Koreans running for Japan called Kitei Son and Shoryu Nan.

The little brown men had not said much to anybody but had spent a couple of months in Berlin running around the roads, with particular attention to the Marathon course, which they travelled nearly every day.

In the days before the race Harper decided that, barring Kitei Son, he would win the race.

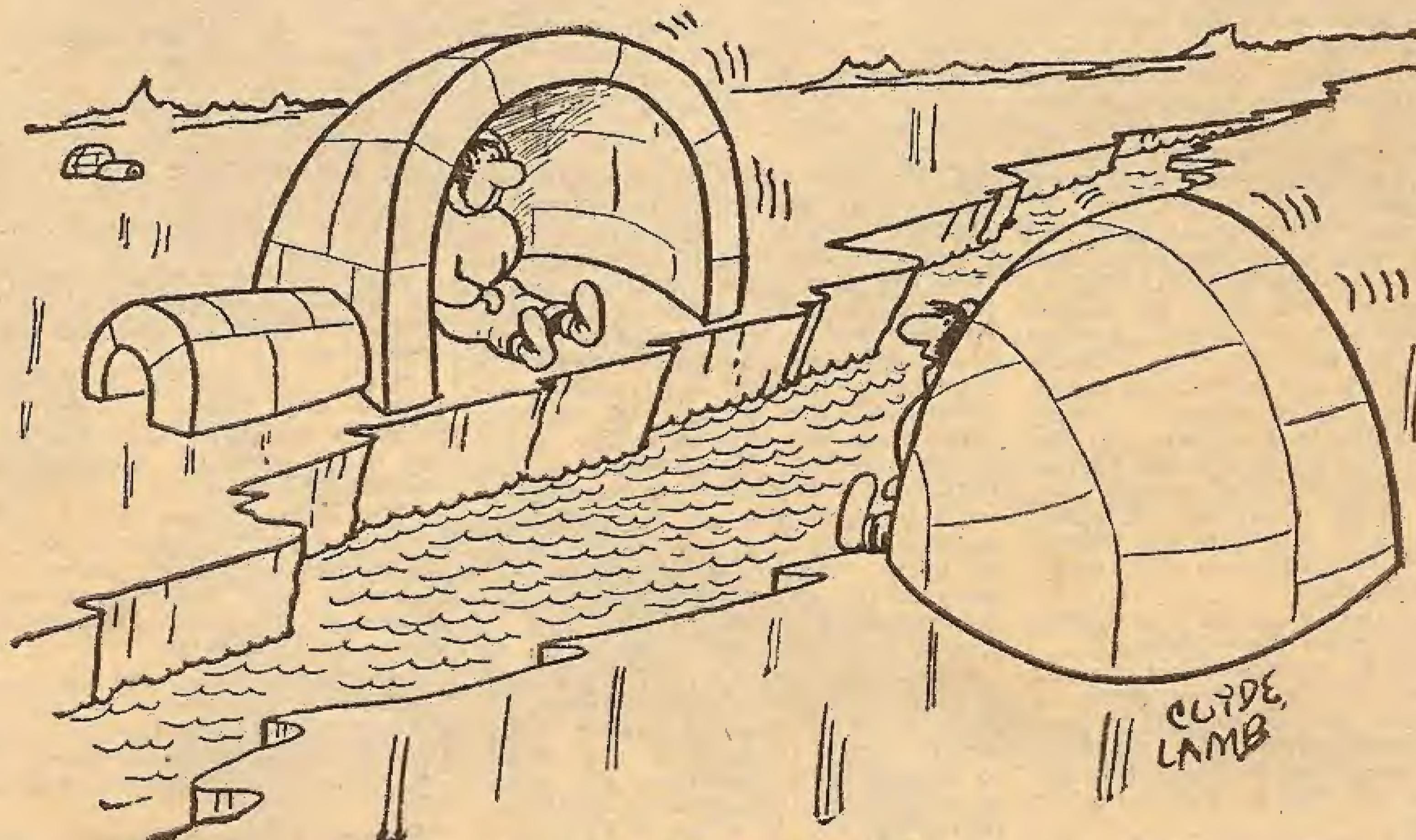
Off they went on a blazing Berlin Sunday, and Zabala ran straight to the lead. He set a terrific pace, and with half the journey gone was still there. Behind him, running side by side, and occasionally having a word to say to each other, were Harper and Son. Zabala showed signs of cracking nearing the eighteen-mile mark, and at twenty miles he threw up the sponge. Harper tried to go with Son, but his feet, which had been blistering from the ten-mile mark, became worse.

Son shook him off and went on to defeat him by nearly two minutes, although the Britisher had the satisfaction of breaking the Olympic record, too.

IN 1948 the Marathon produced one of the greatest dramas in its history. Also one of the biggest upsets. One of the favorites for the race was Etienne Gailly, an ex-paratrooper from Belgium. For seventeen miles he led the pack and was then displaced by a little Korean, Yun Chil Coie. Gailly got the lead back at twenty-five miles.

The Belgian was first into the Stadium. Those who had seen Dorando Pietri forty years before claimed that of the two the Italian had been the least distressed. Gailly, limping, bent over with stitch and his face contorted with pain, was out on his feet. He began to stumble around the track for the final lap. But right behind him was another figure, this one running with controlled stride and obviously the man who would win. His appearance had everybody searching their programmes. It was discovered that he was running for Argentina, but who was he. It turned out to be a man named Calebra. He raced past the reeling Gailly and went on to win. Poor Gailly, scarcely knowing where he was, was cut out of second place by Tom Richards, a Welshman, before he reeled over the finish line to collapse in a heap. The event was a real upset. Calebra was only the Argentine third string and regarded as a very weak third string at that.

The Marathon has always been an Olympic highlight. No event takes anything like the stamina, combined with judgment, that the hard pounding for 26 miles 385 yards takes. It's better than ten miles an hour for two and a half hours. There have been moves to have it eliminated from the Olympic programme, but it's there to stay. And on past performances there's no such thing as a certainty in it.



"... as I was saying ..."

Terminal Quest

STRANGERS CAME TO THE NEW PLANET, SUBDUED THE PEOPLE, AND CALLED IT "NEW EARTH."

* By PAUL ANDERSON

THE sun woke him.

He stirred uneasily, feeling the long shafts of light slant over the land. The muted gossip of birds became a rush of noise and a small wind blew till the leaves chattered at him. Wake up, wake up, wake up, Rugo, there is a new day on the hills and you can't lie sleeping, wake up!

The light reached under his eyelids, roiling the darkness of dreams. He mumbled and curled into a tighter knot, drawing sleep back around him like a cloak, sinking toward the dark and the unknowingness with his mother's face before him.

She laughed down the long ways of night, calling and calling, and he tried to follow her, but the sun wouldn't let him.

Mother, he whimpered. Mother, please come back, mother.

She had gone and left him, once very long ago. He had been little then and the cave had been big and gloomy and cold, and there were flutterings and watchings in the shadows of it and he had been frightened. She had said she was going after food, and had kissed him and gone off down the steep moonlit valley. And there she must have met the Strangers, because she never came back. And he had cried for a long time and called her name, but she didn't return.

That had been so long ago that he couldn't number the years. But now that he was getting old, she must have remembered him and been sorry she left, for lately she often came back at night.

He got up, slowly climbing to all four feet, pulling himself erect with the help of a low branch. Hunger was a dull ache in him. He looked emptily around at the thicket, a copse of scrub halfway up the hillside.

He shook his big scaly head, clearing out the fog of dreams. Today he would have to go down into the valley. He had eaten the last berries on the hillside, he had waited here for days with weakness creeping from his belly through his bones, and now he would have to go down to the Strangers.

He went slowly out of the thicket and started down the hillside.

He came to a brook that rushed down the hillside, rising from a spring higher up and flowing to join the Thunder River.

But he would be dead before the brook was dry, so it didn't matter too much.

He waded over it. The cold water

set his lame foot to tingling and needling. Beyond it he found the old trail and went down that. He walked slowly, not being eager to do that which he must, and tried to make a plan.

The Strangers had given him food now and then, out of charity or in return for work. Once he had labored almost a year for a man, who had given him a place to sleep and as much as he wanted to eat—a good man to work for, not full of the hurry which seemed to be in his race, with a quiet voice and gentle eyes. But then the man had taken a woman, and she was afraid of Rugo, so he had had to leave.

A couple of times, too, men from Earth itself had come to talk to him. They had asked him many questions about his people. How had they lived, what was their word for this and that, did he remember any of their dances or music? But he couldn't tell them much, for his folk had been hunted before he was born, he had seen a flying-thing spear his father with flame and later his mother had gone to look for food and not come back. The men from Earth had, in fact, told him more than he could give them, told him about cities and books and gods which his people had had, and if he had wanted to learn these things from the Strangers they could have told him more. They, too, had paid him something, and he had eaten well for a while.

WHEN he came down into the valley, the mists had lifted in ragged streamers and already he could feel the heat of the sun. The trail led onto a road, and he turned north toward the human settlements. Nobody was in sight yet, and it was quiet. His footfalls rang loud on the pavement, it was hard under his soles and the impact of walking jarred up into his legs like small sharp needles. He looked around him, trying to ignore the hurting.

They had cut down the trees and harrowed the land and sowed grain of Earth, until now the valley lay open to the sky. The brassy sun of summer and the mordant winds of winter rode over the deep glens he remembered, and the only trees were in neat orchards bearing alien fruit. It was as if these Strangers were afraid of the dark, as if they were so frightened by shadows and half-lights and rustling unseen distances that they had to clear it all away, one sweep of fire and thunder and

then the bright inflexible steel of their world rising above the dusty plains.

He heard the machine coming behind him, roaring and pounding down the road with a whistle of cloven air flapping in its wake, and remembered in a sudden gulping that it was forbidden to walk in the middle of the road. He scrambled to one side, but it was the wrong one, the side they drove on, and the truck screamed around him on smoking tires and ground to a halt on the shoulder.

A Stranger climbed out, and he was almost dancing with fury. His curses poured forth so fast that Rugo couldn't follow them. He caught a few words: "Damned weird thing . . . Couldna killed me . . . Oughta be shot . . . Have the law on yuh . . ."

Rugo stood watching. He had twice the height of the skinny pink shape that jittered and railed before him, and some four times the bulk, and though he was old one sweep of his hand would stave in the skull and spatter the brains on the hot hard concrete. Only all the power of the Strangers was behind the creature, fire and ruin and flying steel, and he was the last of his folk and sometimes his mother came at night to see him. So he stood quietly, hoping the man would get tired and go away.

A booted foot slammed against his shin, and he cried out with the pain of it and lifted one arm the way he had done as a child when the bombs were falling and metal rained around him.

The man sprang back. "Don't yuh try it," he said quickly. "Don't do nothing. They'll hunt yuh down if yuh touch me."

"Go," said Rugo, twisting his tongue and throat to the foreign syllables which he knew better than the dimly recalled language of his people. "Please go."

"Yuh're on'y here while yuh behave yehrself. Keep yuhr place, see. Nasty devil! Watch yuhrself!" The man got back into the truck and started it. The spinning tires threw gravel back at Rugo.

He stood watching the machine, his hands hanging empty at his sides, until it was beyond his ageing sight. Then he started walking again, careful to stay on the correct edge of the road.

Presently a farm appeared over a ridge.



"Can you tell us a story, Mr. Troll?"
the children asked. So he leaned back
and fumbled around in his mind.

Explorers, where is . . .

the land of pink elephants?

NO... Be sensible!... It isn't "Plonk Alley." Far away in East Africa, the snow-capped peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro stand stark against the blue sky. Except for tiny stations down the track from Mombassa to Nairobi, there is no sign of life. No friendly farms, no grazing herds, no native huts break the eternal horizon of tangled thorn-trees. Nothing moves here except the elephant and the rhinoceros, the lion and the antelope . . . nothing, that is, but tourists. These thousands of square miles of useless, arid country have been turned into a Mecca for people who love animals, and the Tsavo National Park attracts people from all over the world who want to photograph big game. What was once a millionaire's sport has come within the reach of upper-middle incomes and everyone benefits—tourists, hotel-keepers and animals. But . . . best of all . . . Tsavo Park is one of the few places on the globe where you can be stone, cold sober and still see pink elephants. And how? Well, the jumbos get that way from rolling in the red mud.

Hugo's feet throbbed with the hardness of the road.

He stood at the entrance, wondering if he should go in or not.

He puzzled out the name on the mailbox. Elias Whately. He'd try his luck with Elias Whately.

As he came up the driveway a dog bounded forth and started barking, high shrill notes that hurt his ears.

"Please," he said to the dog. His bass rumbled in the warm still air and the barking grew more frantic. "Please, I will not harm, please do not bite."

"O-oh!"

The woman in the front yard let out a little scream and ran before him, up the steps and through the door to slam it in his face. Hugo sighed, feeling suddenly tired. She was afraid. They were all afraid. They had called his folks trolls, which were something evil in their old myths. He remembered that his grandfather, before he died in a shelterless winter, had called them torrogs, which he said were pale bony things that ate the dead, and Hugo smiled with a wryness that was sour in his mouth.

But little use in trying here. He turned to go.

"You!"

He turned back to face the tall man who stood in the door. The man held a rifle, and his long face was clamped tight. Behind him peeked a red-headed boy, maybe 13 years old, a cub with the same narrow eyes of his father.

"What's the idea of coming in here?" asked the man. His voice was like the grating of iron.

"Please, sir," said Hugo, "I am hungry. I thought if I could do some work, or if you had any scraps—"

"So now it's begging, eh?" demanded Whately. "Don't you know that's against the law? You could be put in jail. By heaven, you ought to be! Public nuisance, that's all you are."

It was no use explaining; thought Hugo. Maybe there really had been a misunderstanding, as his grandfather had claimed, maybe the old counsellors had thought the first explorers were only asking if more like them could come and had not expected settlers when they gave permission — or maybe, realising that the Strangers would be too strong,

they had decided to break their word and fight to hold their planet.

But what use now? The Strangers had won the war, with guns and bombs and a plague virus that went like a scythe through the natives; they had hunted the few immunes down like animals, and now he was the last of his kind in all the world and it was too late to explain.

"Sic 'im, Shep!" cried the boy. "Sic 'im! Go get 'im!"

The dog barked in close, rushing and retreating, trying to work its cowardice into rage.

"Shut up, Sam," said Whately to his son. Then to Hugo, "Get!"

"I will be on my way, sir," he said.

"No, you won't" snapped Whately. "I won't have you going down to the village and scaring little kids there. Back where you came from!"

"But, sir — please —"

"Get!" The gun pointed at him, he looked down the muzzle and turned and went out the gate. Whately waved him to the left, back down the road.

The dog charged in and sank its teeth in an ankle where the scales had fallen away. He screamed with the pain of it and began to run, slowly and heavily, weaving in his course. The boy Sam laughed and followed him.

"Nyaah, nyaah, nyaah, ugly ol' troll, crawl back down in yuhr dirty ol' hole!"

AFTER a while there were other children, come from the neighboring farms, in that timeless blur of running and raw lungs and thudding heart and howling, thundering noise. They followed him, and their dogs barked, and the flung stones rattled off his sides with little swords where they struck.

"Nyaah, nyaah, nyaah, ugly ol' troll, crawl back down in yuhr dirty ol' hole!"

"Please," he whispered. "Please."

When he came to the old trail he hardly saw it. The road danced in a blinding glimmer of heat and dust.

Presently he couldn't go on. The hillside was too steep, there was no will left to drive his muscles. He sat down, pulling in knees and tail, hiding his head in his arms.

After still a longer time, he opened his eyes. The lids felt raw and sandy, vision wavered as if the heat-shimmer had entered his brain. There was a man who stood watching him.

Rugo shrank back, lifting a hand before his face. But the man stood quietly, puffing away on a battered old pipe. He was shabbily dressed and there was a rolled bundle on his shoulders.

"Had a pretty rough session there, didn't you, old-timer?" he asked. His voice was soft. "Here." He bent a lanky frame over the crouching native. "Here, you need a drink."

Rugo lifted the canteen to his lips and gulped till it was empty. The man looked him over. "You're not too banged up," he decided. "Just cuts and abrasions; you trolls always were a tough breed. I'll give you some aneurine, though."

He fished a tube of yellow salve out of one pocket and smeared it on the wounds. The hurt eased, faded to a warm tingle, and Hugo sighed.

"You are very kind, sir," he said unsurely.

"Nah. I wanted to see you anyway. How you feel now? Better?"

Rugo nodded, slowly, trying to stop the shivers which still ran in him. "I am well, sir," he said.

"Don't 'sir' me. Too many people'd laugh themselves sick to hear it. What was your trouble, anyway?"

"I — I wanted food, sir — pardon me. I w-wanted food."

Rugo pulled himself to his feet. It was easier than he had thought it would be. "Please, if you will be so kind, I know a place with trees —"

The man swore, softly and imaginatively. "So that's what they've done. Not content with blotting out a whole race, they have to take the guts from the last one left. Look, you, I'm Manuel Jones, and you'll speak to me as one free bum to another or not at all. Now let's find your trees."

The human started a fire and opened some cans in his pack and threw their contents into a small kettle. Hugo watched hungrily, hoping he would give him a little, ashamed and angry with himself for the way his stomach rumbled. Manuel Jones squatted under a tree, shoved his hat off his forehead, and got his pipe going afresh.

Blue eyes in a weatherbeaten face watched Hugo with steadiness and no hate nor fear. "I've been looking forward to seeing you," he said. "I wanted to meet the last membebr of a race which could build the Temple of Otheii."

"What is that?" asked Hugo.

"You don't know?"

"No, sir — I mean, pardon me, no, Mr. Jones —"

"Manuel. And don't you forget it."

"No, I was born while the Strangers were hunting the last of us — Manuel. We were always fleeing. I was only a yew years old when my mother was killed. I met the last other Gunnu — member of my race — when I was only about 20. That was almost 200 years ago. Since then I have been the last."

"God," whispered Manuel. "God, what a race of free-wheeling devils we are!"

"I am old," said Hugo. "I am too old to hate."

"But not too old to be lonesome, eh?" Manuel's smile was lopsided. He fell into silence, puffing blue clouds into the blaze of air.

Presently he went on, thoughtfully, "Of course, one can understand the humans. They were the poor and the disinherited of our land-hungry Earth, they came 40 years over empty space with all their hopes, giving their lives to the ships so their children might land — and then your council forbade it. They couldn't return, and man never was too nice about his methods when need drove him. They were lonely and scared, and your hulking horrible appearance made it worse. So they fought. But they needn't have been so thorough about it. That was sheer hellishness."

"It does not matter," said Rugo. "It was long ago."

"The devil! Help yourself, old-timer, plenty for all."

The smell of food filled Rugo's nostrils, he could feel his mouth going wet and his stomach screaming at him. And the Stranger really seemed to mean it. Slowly, he dipped his hands into the vessel and brought them out full and ate with the ungraceful manners of his people.

AFTERWARD they lay back, stretching and sighing and letting the faint breeze blow over them.

"I am afraid this meal used all your supplies," he said clumsily.

"No matter," yawned Manuel. "I was damn sick of beans anyway. Meant to lift a chicken tonight."

"You are not from these parts," said Rugo. There was a thawing within him. Here was someone who seemed to expect nothing more than friendship.

"You are not a plain tramp," he added thoughtfully.

"Maybe not," said Manuel. "I taught school a good many years ago, in Cetusport. Got into a bit of trouble and had to hit the road and liked it well enough not to settle down anywhere since. Hobo, hunter, traveller to any place that sounds interesting — it's a big world and there's enough in it for a lifetime. I want to get to know this New Terra planet, Rugo. Not that I mean to write a book or any such nonsense. I just want to know it."

He sat up on one elbow. "That's why I came to see you," he said. "You're part of the old world, the last part of it except for empty ruins and a few torn pages in museums.

"The planet was yours before we came," he said, "and it shaped you and you shaped it; and now the landscape which was yours will become part of us, and it'll change us in its own slow and subtle ways."

They talked for a while longer, and then the human rose. "I've got to go, Rugo," he said.

Rugo got up with him and wrapped the dignity of a host about his nakedness. "I would be honored," he said gravely.

He stood watching the man go until he was lost to sight down the curve of the trail. Then he sighed a little.

He would bring food tomorrow, Rugo knew, and this time there would be more said, the comradeship would be wholly easy and the eyes wholly frank. It pained him that he could offer nothing in return.

But wait, maybe he could. The farther hills were thick with berries, some must still be there even this late in the season.

It was a log trip, and his sinews protested at the thought.

He went over the crest of the hill and down the other side.

Berries — yes, a lot of them clustered around Thunder Falls, where there was always coolness and damp.

They weren't such a bad race, the Strangers. They had made war with all the fury that was in them, had wiped out a threat with unnecessary savagery; they still fought and cheated and oppressed each other. But among them were a few like Manuel, and he wondered if his own people had boasted more of that sort than the Strangers did.

Presently he came out on the slope of the highest hill in the region and started climbing it toward Thunder Falls. He could hear the distant roaring of a cataract, half lost in the pounding of his own blood as he fought his aging body slowly up the rocky slant, and in the dance of sunlight he stopped to breathe and tell himself that not far ahead were shadow and mist and a coolness of rushing waters. And when he was ready to come back, the night would be there to walk home with him.

The shouting falls drowned out the voices of the children, nor had he looked for them since he knew they were forbidden to visit this danger spot without adults along. When he topped the stony ridge and stood looking down into the gorge, he saw them just below and his heart stumbled in sickness.

The whole troop was there, with red-haired Sam Whately leading them in a berry hunt up and down the craggy rocks and along the pebbled beach. Rugo stood on the bluff above them, peering down through the fine cold spray and trying to tell his panting body to turn and run before they saw him.

"Looka that!" He heard Sam's voice faintly through the roar and crash of the falls. "Looky who's here! Ol' Blackie!"

A stone cracked against his ribs.

He called out in a bass that trembled through the rocks. "Do not do that!"

"Yaah, listen what he says, ha-ha-ha!"

"Leave me alone," cried Rugo, "or I will tell your parents that you were here."

They stopped then, almost up to him, and for a moment only the yapping dogs spoke. Then Sam sneered at him. "Aw, who'd listen to yuh, ol' troll?"

"I think they will believe me," said Rugo. "But if you do not believe it, try and find out."

They hovered for a moment, unsure, staring at each other. Then Sam said, "Okay, ol' tattletale, okay. But you let us be, see?"

"I will do that," said Rugo, and the hard held breath puffed out of him in a great sigh. He realised how painfully his heart had been fluttering, and weakness was watery in his legs.

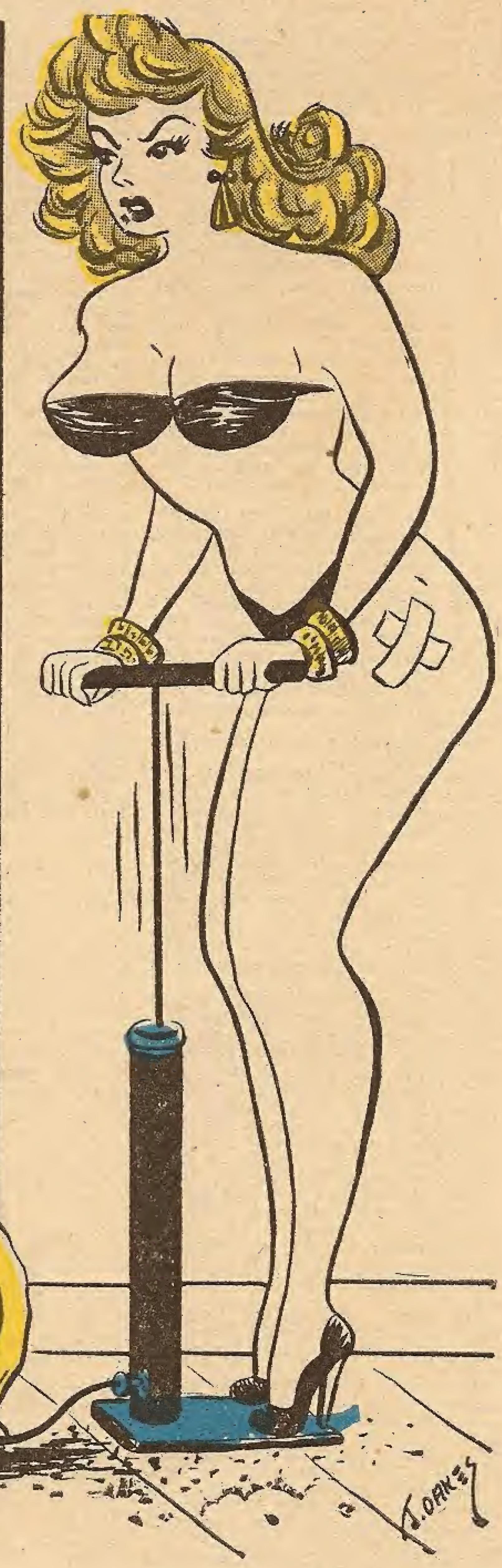
THEY went sullenly back to their berry gathering, and Rugo scrambled down the bluff and took the opposite direction.

They called off the dogs too, and soon he was out of sight of them and into the berry bushes. Clustered under rocks and taller plants, and it was something of an art to locate the food-laden shrub. Rugo had had many decades of practice.

It was peaceful work. He felt his heart and lungs slowing, content and restfulness stole over him. So had



"Have the auditor check Putney's books. We know he can't live on the salary we pay him."



he gone with his mother often and often in the time that was clearer to him than all the blurred years between, and it was as if she walked beside him now and showed him where to look and smiled when he turned over a bush and found the little blue spheres. He was gathering food for his friend, and that was good.

After some time, he grew aware that a couple of children had left the main group and were following him, a small boy and a girl tagging at a discreet distance and saying nothing. He turned and stared at them, wondering if they meant to attack him after all, and they looked shyly away.

"You sure find a lot of them, Mister Troll," said the boy at last, timidly.

"They grow here," grunted Rugo with unease.

"I'm sorry they was so mean to you," said the girl. "Me and Tommy wasn't there or we wouldn't of let them."

Rugo couldn't remember if they had been with the pack that morning or not. It didn't matter. They were only being friendly in the hope he would show them where to find the berries.

"My dad said the other day he thought he could get you to do some work for him," said the boy. "He'd pay you good."

"Who is your father?" asked Rugo uncertainly.

"He's Mr. Jim Stackman."

Yes, Stackman had never been anything but pleasant, in the somewhat strained and awkward manner of humans.

"Mr. Whately won't let me go down there," said Rugo.

"Oh, him!" said the boy with elaborate scorn. "My dad'll take care of old Sourpuss Whately."

"I don't like Sam Whately neither," said the girl. "He's mean, like his old man."

"Why do you do as he says, then?" asked Rugo.

The boy looked uncomfortable. "He's bigger'n the rest of us," he muttered.

Yes, that was the way of humans, and it wasn't really their fault that the Manuel Joneses were so few among them. They suffered more for it than anyone else, probably.

"Here is a nice berry bush," said Rugo. "You can pick it if you want to."

He sat down on a mossy bank, watching them eat, thinking that maybe things had changed today. Maybe he wouldn't need to move away after all.

The girl came and sat down beside him. "Can you tell me a story, Mister Troll?" she asked.

"H'm?" Rugo was startled out of his reverie.

"My daddy says an old-timer like you must know lots of things," she said.

Why, yes, thought Rugo, he did know a good deal, but it wasn't the sort of tale you could give children. They didn't know hunger and loneliness and shuddering winter cold, weakness and pain and the slow grinding out of hope, and he didn't want them ever to know it. But, well, he could remember a few things besides. His father had told him stories of what had once been, and —

... Your race will always haunt us,

no matter how long man is here something of you will enter into him . . . There'll always be a shadow just beyond the fire, a voice in the wind and in the rivers, something in the soil that will enter the bread he eats and the water he drinks, and that will be the lost race which was yours.

"Why, yes," he said slowly. "I think so."

The boy came and sat beside the girl, and they watched him with large eyes. He leaned back against the bank and fumbled around in his mind.

laughter drifted down through the boom of waters, faint and clear in the evening.

"Gee, he shouldn't," said the little girl.

"I'm the king of the mountain!"

"Young fool," grumbled Rugo.

"I'm the king of the mountain!"

"Sam, come down—" The child's voice was almost lost in thunder.

He laughed again and crouched, feeling with his hands along the rough stone for a way back. Rugo stiffened, remembering how slippery the rocks were and how the river hungered.

The boy started down, lost his hold, and toppled.

Rugo had a glimpse of the red head as it rose over the foaming green. Then it was gone, snuffed like a torch as the river sucked it under.

Rugo started to his feet, yelling, remembering that even now he had the strength of many humans and that a man had called him brave. Some dim corner of his mind told him to wait, to stop and think, and he ran to the shore with the frantic knowledge that if he did consider the matter wisely he would never go in.

The water was cold around him, it sank fangs of cold into his body and he cried out with the pain.

Sam's head appeared briefly at the foot of the cataract, whirling downstream. Rugo's feet lost bottom and he struck out, feeling the current grab him and yank him from shore.

Swimming, whipping downstream, he shook the water from his eyes and gasped and looked wildly around. Yes, there came Sam, a little above him, swimming with mindless reflex.

The slight body crashed against his shoulder. Almost, the river had its way, then he got a clutch on the arm and his legs and tail and free hand were working.

They whirled on down the stream and he was deaf and blind and the strength was spilling from him like blood from an open wound.

There was a rock ahead. Dimly he saw it through the cruel blaze of sunlight, a broad flat stone rearing above a foam of water. He flailed, striving for it, sobbing the wind into his empty lungs, and they hit with a shock that exploded in his bones.

Widly he grabbed at the smooth surface, groping for a handhold. One arm lifted Sam Whately's feebly stirring body out, fairly tossed it on top of the rock, and then the river had him again.

The boy hadn't breathed too much water thought Rugo in his darkening brain. He could lie there till a flying-thing from the village picked him up. Only — why did I save him? Why did I save him? He stoned me, and now I'll never be able to give Manuel those berries. I'll never finish the story of King Utorri and his heroes.

The water was cool and green around him as he sank. He wondered if his mother would come for him.

A few miles farther down, the river flows broad and quiet between gentle banks. Trees grow there, and the last sunlight streams through their leaves to glisten on the surface. This is down in the valley where the homes of man are built.

Which cigarette is . . .

easiest to smoke?

TIGHTLY-PACKED cigarettes give less irritating smoke, reports J. K. Finnegan in the US Journal of Pharmacology. The investigator devised various methods of measuring the irritant properties of tobacco smoke and found that they varied considerably in different brands of cigarettes. His research disclosed that two factors determine the degree of irritation—tightness of pack and moisture content. Loosely packed, less moist cigarettes are the most irritating. So, you hardened smokers, take heed. We're not suggesting any definite brand of cigarette (we're allergic to libel suits); but we do suggest that you settle for something that does not fall to pieces in your mouth.

A LONG time ago," he said, "before people had come to New Terra, there were trolls like me living here. We built houses and farms, and we had our songs and our stories just like you do. So I can tell you a little bit about that, and maybe some day when you are grown up and have children of your own you can tell them."

"Sure," said the boy.

"Well," said Rugo, "there was once a troll king named Utorri who lived in the Western Dales, not far from the sea. He lived in a big castle with towers reaching up so they nearly scraped the stars, and the wind was always blowing around the towers and ringing the bells. Even when the trolls were asleep they could hear the shivering of the bells. And it was a rich castle, whose doors always stood open to any wayfarers, and each night there was a feast where all the great trolls met and music sounded and the heroes told of their wanderings—"

"Hey, look!"

The children's heads turned, and Rugo's annoyed glance followed theirs. The sun was low now, its rays were long and slanting and touched the hair of Sam Whately with fire where he stood. He had climbed up on the highest crag above the falls and balanced swaying on the narrow perch, laughing. The

BITTER SPICE OF DEATH

* By LESTER WAY

DANNY KING wiped the back of his hand over his chin; then brought his attention to the book of flies. It was a gesture Danny made when he was nervous, and a cop shouldn't be nervous. Not when he is getting flies for trout fishing.

"Thanks, Joe," he said, "they're just right. And I need this holiday."

He did need it. There had been too much strain in the homicide section, too many cross-currents that kept Danny on edge. He pocketed the flies, paid Joe, and walked out of the sports shop.

Braddon was there waiting for him. Braddon stood by the shining police car. His face was like looking into hell.

"There's something important, Danny," he said. "Get in the car."

"There's always something important," Danny said. "My leave starts tomorrow," he added.

"Your leave hasn't started yet."

Braddon's voice came from down under his stomach. "And this is for you, Danny," it grated.

Braddon had been on the force longer than Danny, he worked with Danny, and he decided things. He had a driving manner that got results and was always three hunches ahead of Danny. He had seen plenty of hell, too, but it never showed in his face till now.

Danny got in the car.

It was too late to start on a new case, with his holidays coming tomorrow. He should never have told Braddon about Joe and his hand-made flies. Then Braddon wouldn't have found him. They drove to the morgue.

The body was on a slab, a girl's body, very white and beautiful. Except for her head. Something hard

had hit it and had kept on hitting it. Danny turned away.

"Some of her face is left," Braddon croaked. "Go and look at it, Danny, and look at her hands."

Danny didn't need to, but he looked, and a knife was twisted in his lungs. His hair got dank, and he knew his face had gone the same color as Braddon's. He walked outside with Braddon following.

The car, with the uniformed driver, was standing under a light, but Danny stopped in the dark, and he felt Braddon beside him.

It was right for Braddon to be there, because the girl on the slab was Lucille Durant. Golden hair, Danny found himself remembering, and big soft eyes, and the delicate face of a child. Danny hadn't got over Lucille.

He never would get over her, and he would never stop hating Braddon. That girl had been Danny's; he had felt her body warm in his arms, had felt those lips responding with quick eagerness. He had boosted her from a cigarette-girl in a shady nightclub to doing a slick turn in a floor show, and then Braddon had seen Lucille, and Braddon had taken her.

But he hadn't held her. That was what hit Danny hardest.

"You've got to handle this," Braddon said. "I'm resigning."

Braddon wasn't the kind who resigned, and what he said didn't register all at once. He was a cop—a good cop—and proud of it, and Danny stood awfully still while it sank in.

"Do you know how much I hate your guts?" he asked then.

"Sure. You'd like to see me burn,

wouldn't you? You'll try to pin this on me, of course."

"We'll go to the Chief," Braddon said, and moved away.

THE Chief looked at them with steel in his eyes. He was a square man, harder than steel. He didn't look at the badge, or the papers, that Braddon put on his desk, and he didn't argue.

He kept his eyes on Braddon and said, "It's hard on Danny. His leave is over-due and now he'll have to take over. What have you got on the case?"

"She was in her own car in Baker Park," Braddon said. "It was run into some bushes after she was killed — done with a tyre-lever. The fingerprint boys have got all there is."

"Any ideas?"

"The killer's name is Carmody."

Braddon got up. His gaze went around the Chief's office; he gave a grunt, turned to the door and went out.

"What do you think?" the Chief asked.

"I haven't started thinking. Lucille Durant was —"

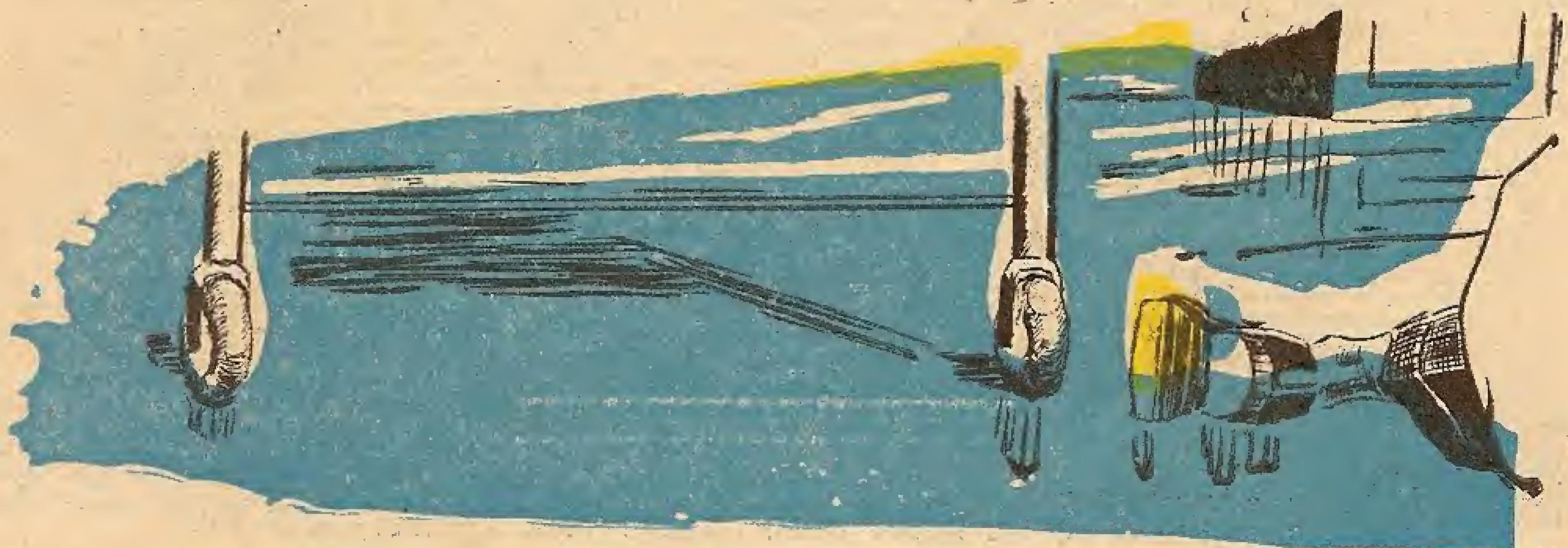
The Chief's telephone jangled and he picked it up. Danny watched his brows come together and watched his frown get darker. The Chief was listening silently.

He pushed it away and gripped the edge of his desk hard. "Hamilton Hospital wants to know if there was a murder tonight in Baker Park. They've got a man who says he killed somebody and doesn't know who or why. He came in under his own power, announced he was crazy, and wanted to be locked up."

"Was his name Carmody?"

"That's not the name he gave; but

THEY HAD BAD DREAMS, BRADDON AND THE GIRL. BUT THEY WERE WAKING UP TOGETHER, IF BRADDON COULD PULL HER OFF THE SLIPPERY-SLIDE





get out there. It could be a lucky break."

* * *

Hamilton Hospital was a big place, right out of town. There were a dozen buildings scattered over as many acres of ground, and Danny went to the office and told them who he was. An athletic doctor talked to him. The doctor talked about delusions, and fantasy, and —"

"Save it up!" Danny snapped. "I don't care if the guy's got myxomatosis! I'm after the killer of Lucille Durant and I want to see this man. I want to hear him talk."

"No help from medical science, of course!" the doctor sneered.

"Not a scrap! He's probably taking you for a ride. Where is he?"

The reception ward for mental cases was a special building standing very much alone. It had a high barbed-wire fence around it; the gate was of very solid wood, and it was locked. Danny jabbed at the push-button.

Carmody. Of course it was Carmody. He was being smart, trying to beat the rap by playing crazy, giving himself up, begging to be protected from himself. But he was not smart when he murdered Lucille with a tyre-lever. That left a mess; it left blood on him . . . and fingerprints on the car. He must have been in a hurry, no time to plan things, and he knew the cops would catch up fast. So he put himself behind barbed-wire and bolted doors — a crazy man telling the doctors about it, saying he didn't know why he did it, that he couldn't help it.

Rain was still falling, and it was cold. Danny shivered, stamped his feet and pushed the bell again.

THE police records didn't have anything about Carmody, but they ought to. He was a shady goon, only visible at nightspots, always spending, always with a pretty girl, one pretty girl after another—him, with his big loose mouth and bony nose, and long ape's arms! It had been Lucille lately; he was the lizard who took Lucille away from Braddon. And Braddon had been through the files at headquarters three times; he had put the vice boys to watching; and he had finished with nil. Carmody spent money; he ran with fancy floosies. Maybe they dug gold for him; but there wasn't any proof.

Danny heard a door opening; he heard keys rattling. Carmody wouldn't feel so smart when he saw Danny; Danny knew too much about him and Lucille and Carmody would know how Danny wanted to see him burn. He would know about Braddon, too; he would be more afraid of Braddon.

Someone was slopping up the wet path to the gate.

Why did Braddon toss his papers in if it was Carmody who murdered Lucille? He didn't have to skid out of the force unless . . . Unless he was going to kill someone—Carmody for instance. So maybe Carmody was getting cover from Braddon, putting strong walls and nurses and doctors between himself and Braddon!

The gate opened, and there was a light over it, and Danny saw a wardsman, a chunky man with a

frown on his face. Danny stood there in the rain, wondering if Braddon knew where Carmody had got to, wondering if Braddon would try to get in.

"It's all right," the wardsman said, "the dangerous ones are locked up."

Danny went in. There were two more doors to unlock before they were inside, and everything in there was very quiet, and very clean. In the day-room, the sister looked at Danny. She looked at his feet, and ran her gaze slowly up his slim figure to his face. Her eyes were black, and like flint. She had a

A girl was there, a pretty girl with a silk dressing-gown over a nightdress. She had red hair, and she looked at Danny with a pensive, wondering expression. It made Danny grope to get hold of something that was in his mind.

"Get back to your room, Miss Prentice!" the sister ordered.

"But I need something to read, Sister. I can't sleep."

"You should have called me. Go to bed and stay there, and I'll bring you some books."

The girl turned misty eyes on Danny. She said, "A cigarette would help. I'm right out of smokes."

Danny flicked his packet and let her take one. He held a match for her, and saw that her nerves were steadier than his. She turned up her face, said, "Thanks," and then went out.

The match burned down to Danny's fingers. He dropped it and said, "Katie Prentice!"

"Do you know her?" the Sister asked, with acid meaning.

Danny knew about her, knew she had been a sensation at the Bacchus Nightclub, doing plastic poses in the nude, and that her face with its wondering expression of an awakening child was what got the crowds. They liked her shape; but they talked about her face. And then she had faded out—six months ago.

"Sure, she used to have the spotlight," Danny said. "Is she crazy?"

"Not now; she's leaving tomorrow. But when she came in we had to strap her down. That's dope for you: we see what it does to them here."

They only see the end of the snow-ride here, Danny thought, only the final pay-off. They hadn't seen Katie Prentice when the snow was sparkling, not the way the customers at the Bacchus saw her, glorified and on top of Olympus, firing men's blood and enslaving their thoughts without one fool among them suspecting what a few grains of cocaine had done to her!

And there was Lucille. Danny had held her body and felt its pulsing eagerness, and he had wondered about Lucille. He had never found out.

"But it's Wellingford you want," the sister reminded him, "and he is insane. Come along."

They went into the corridor. It had a rubber carpet and their feet didn't make any sound. Somewhere behind them a woman commenced to moan, and kept it up, a low, monotonous drone. They passed empty rooms with the doors wide, and one with the door open and a man asleep inside. They came to a closed door, and the nurse pointed. There were narrow slits of glass built into the timber of the door.

Danny looked in and saw a man pacing back and forth, pacing with a nervous tread. He turned, and Danny saw his face.

It was not Carmody, or anyone Danny had ever seen. A small man with a tensely studious face, a thoughtful, mild sort of expression.

"That's Wellingford," the sister said. She unlocked the door and the man stopped pacing. She went in with Danny, and he noticed that

When did man make . . . his first flight?

CENTURIES after he began dreaming about it. In 1480 plans for a helicopter were drawn by Leonardo da Vinci; but not until 304 years later did man get off the ground . . . and then it was in a balloon. Actually, the French started the business in 1782 when the Montgolfier brothers filled a bag with smoke and hot air and watched it soar away. Next year Charles (a Paris physicist) designed a balloon filled with hydrogen, which made a 45-minute flight and soared to 3000 feet. In the same year, Jean de Rozier was lifted by a balloon held by a rope; and a few months later, Marquis d'Arlandes went up 500 feet in a flight of less than six minutes. The next year, Meusneir of France built the first powered balloon, his crew cranking three propellers. They touched three miles an hour.

smile without any mirth, and small sharp teeth. She had a good complexion, and lips that were full, and hard at the same time.

"You want to see Wellingford?"

"If that's the name he gave."

"It is his name! The papers in his pockets prove it."

"Okay. Names don't count, and he'd use a different one when he was on the loose. Where is he?"

"I'll take you to him, but the doctor has given orders—"

"Forget his orders! This is murder, and I'm in charge. Your story-book quack can send for the police if he doesn't like it."

The sister looked at Danny's face more closely. Danny saw some of the color leave her cheeks. He remembered how Braddon had looked, and he supposed this woman was seeing naked hell in his face now. Then she shifted her gaze, and Danny heard a rustle of silk behind him.



*"Remember that recipe for the chocolate layer cake you're crazy
about? Do you mind adding another ingredient to it?"*



"He was the dumbest salesman. He thought I was Betty Grable."

she wasn't afraid. Wellingford hardly noticed her.

SHE went out and closed the door and called the wardsman. Danny saw the wardsman come and stand idly in the corridor. Wellingford nodded his head jerkily at the wardsman.

"I asked them to do that," he said. "I want them to be there to stop me if I try to murder someone else."

"Yeah, they told me. I'm from the police, you know."

"Oh!" Wellingford sat down on his bed. "It's funny, but I hadn't thought of that. There'll be a trial, I'll be convicted, they'll take me to the —"

"You'd like that, wouldn't you?" Danny interrupted.

"Like it? Well—"

"Tell me the whole story. How did you meet the girl? Where did you go with her, how did you kill her? We have to know these things."

"The girl?" Wellingford's face was blank for a moment, and then it lit up. "Yes, of course—the girl in the park! It was dark, you see, and I was walking along the roadway going home and I saw her ahead of me. She was walking slowly, as if she expected to meet someone, but there was no one in sight. And something took hold of me. It was a thing inside of me that I've been fighting for a long time. It took hold of me and told me to kill her. That's all. I can't explain it, I just did it."

"I see. You sneaked up behind her and—what did you use?"

"My pocket knife, of course! I stabbed her, and cut her throat, and slashed her flesh. I was a different man; I was a terrible wild beast for

a few minutes, and then, when I felt her blood on my shoes and got some of it on my hands and smelled it, I got calm again and realised what I had done. I was horrified."

"Did you go home?"

"I couldn't. It wasn't possible to face people I knew. I kept on walking, and I thought about it, and after a while I knew what I had to do. I came here and got them to lock me up. That was right, don't you think? Don't you?"

"Sure it was, and you'll be all right here. I won't bother you again."

Danny moved to go and Wellingford caught his sleeve. "There are other people here! You mustn't let me kill them! If the door isn't locked and that thing takes hold of me it would be terrible. And it would be your fault!"

Danny closed the door on the babbling lunatic. Now he had to find Carmody, and he had to find Braddon. Carmody would be lying low, Braddon would be stalking him. Maybe if he tracked Braddon—

The wardsman was grinning at him. "I'll bet you don't crack most murders that easy," he said.

"There's only one thing wrong," Danny told him. "That poor fool didn't kill anyone. He just imagined it."

The wardsman came close and pushed his face at Danny. "He didn't imagine the blood on his shoes! And there was blood on his trousers where he wiped his hands. I undressed him, so I ought to know."

Danny held his breath while he studied the wardsman. The man was in earnest, he was worked up about it.

"Did he talk about the murder?" Danny asked.

"He wouldn't stop talking about it, raved about it. He's loony all right, but—"

"Did he say it was a girl he killed? Did he tell you what he did with the body?"

"Hell, no! I got the idea it was a man, and he said he couldn't remember what he did for half an hour afterwards."

"Well, it was a girl, and he didn't kill her. The man who did would be spattered with blood from head to foot. I guess Wellingford came along right after she was killed, and walked into the blood. He got it on his hands, and smelt it, and his imagination did the rest."

The sister came down the corridor, moving fast. "Ferguson!" she called. "There's a violent case in the ambulance. Go out and help them—quick!"

They could hear the ambulance pulling up, and Ferguson broke records getting to the first door. His keys jangled as he thrust one into the lock.

"You could give a hand, Mr. Policeman! It's a fighting drunk with his head badly cut. He was in the casualty ward, but he smashed things, so they're bringing him here to strap him down while the doctor stitches his head. They're worse than madmen."

Danny caught up with the wardsman. He needed action. He'd enjoy getting a hold on a hooch-crazy wrecker; it would steady his nerves to feel a man wilt in his hands.

The young doctor was with the gorilla, and the crazy man looked as if he had come through a slaughtering. His face was a mask of blood. Half his scalp seemed to be hanging loose, and blood had spattered his clothing so that, where the light fell on him, it gave off a red gleam.

He kicked the ambulance man, and the doctor twisted his arm. The ambulance man let go, and the drunk tried to swing the doctor off.

Danny lunged and used a special hold. The gorilla went limp. Danny marched him through the gate, up the path, and inside.

They got him to a room and tried to take off his blood-stained clothes; and as soon as Danny's hold was released, he started fighting again. He smashed the doctor in the eye. He sent a kick at Ferguson's stomach.

While Danny stood and watched and didn't do a thing. Because, in that room, in the good light, he could see through the mask of blood, he could see the face that was under the mask, and seeing that face was like a whiff of ether to Danny.

It was Carmody's face.

Danny stood stiff and felt hate swelling up in him till it crowded everything else out. Then Carmody's flat fist went back to slam the doctor again, and Danny moved.

He stepped in faster than light. He put all his hate behind a blow that buried his fist in Carmody's solar plexus.

Carmody gave a long sigh and went down on the bed. Ferguson strapped one wrist to the iron bedstead, and Carmody gasped for breath. The wardsman strapped

the other wrist; Carmody writhed in pain; and Ferguson got the straps on his ankles. Carmody opened his eyes and strained against the straps; then lay back, breathing heavily.

The doctor examined the cut on Carmody's scalp, and Ferguson commenced stripping off the clothes. Danny took pads from his pocket and got Carmody's finger-prints from the blood that was plastered on them.

"Get the sister!" the doctor ordered. "Help her to clean him up ready for the stitches, and tell her we'll need an anaesthetic."

The wound on Carmody's head was big, and jagged, and shallow. It had stopped bleeding, and the blood on his face and hair was almost dry. He opened his eyes again, brown eyes that glinted when the light hit them. He looked at Danny, then closed his eyes.

But they had looked straight at Danny, and they saw him. His chest was rising and falling easily; there wasn't a smell of whisky on his; he was not drunk. He only wanted them to think he was drunk. His wound looked bad; it had bled a lot, but it wasn't even dangerous.

His clothes were on the floor. Nice clothes—expensive, smeared and spattered all over with blood. Just like the man must be who murdered Lucille, only this was Carmody's blood. Or was it?

The cut head could be an alibi to account for the blood on him that shouldn't be there, that he didn't have time to get rid of.

"What do you do with his clothes, and the things in his pockets?" Danny asked.

"We check them and wrap them up ready for him when he's discharged," the doctor said.

Danny picked up the clothes. He held them at arm's length and carried them to the day-room. He could see that something was needling the doctor, who was like a rocket all ready to go off, and in the day-room he turned on Danny.

Danny poked him with a finger before he could speak. "Just a minute, Horace," Danny cautioned. "I'm going to empty those pockets and take what I find. I also want his clothes."

The doctor pressed his lips tight. His eye, where Carmody had hit him, was going blue. He said: "I'll have to telephone your headquarters, Mr. King. You did a thing that no hospital permits. You assaulted a patient. I'll have to ask them to order you out of the ward."

"Go ahead! And tell them it was Carmody I slammed. Tell them he wasn't drunk, just pretending, and that he was covered in blood, but not all of it was his own. And now have a look at his clothes before you make such a damned fool of yourself!"

"I've had all the insolence I'll stand from—"

"The police are never insolent, Horace! But we don't let fools get in our way. Especially when it's murder."

The doctor opened his mouth and then bit the words back. He clenched his fists and stood gripping himself. The wardsman was heating water; the sister was taking things

out of a cabinet; they both pretended to be very intent on what they were doing. None of them saw Katie Prentice come to the doorway.

"Carmody? Did I hear you say Carmody?" Katie asked.

The sister whirled around. "Prentice! Didn't I tell you—?"

"I came to see about the books you promised. But what is it about Carmody? Is he in here?"

Danny saw the girl's breasts moving up and down fast. And her eyes weren't wide or misty; they were narrowed out; there was a light in them that he couldn't read.

"He's strapped down tight," Danny told her. "He can't get at you."

KATIE stood for a moment, then faded from the door. The rustle of her gown came from the corridor, and the gas-jet hissed, and the woman in the female wing moaned a little louder.

"Let's see what Carmody had in his pockets," Danny said. He picked up the coat and started emptying things out. A wallet, a couple of letters, a driver's licence—

The telephone rang and the doctor jumped at it. He listened and turned to Danny.

"More policemen! They're here about Carmody's accident. What do I tell them?"

"Tell them to come up here. I can handle Carmody but I want his fingerprints checked." He went on emptying the pockets.

There was another wallet. Danny put his hand in and pulled it out; not an ordinary wallet, not for carry-

ing money, but thicker and with a strong elastic band around it.

"Oh, Ferguson! Go to the gate and let the police force in!" the doctor said. There was bottled-up spite in his voice.

The wardsman went out. His keys clanged as he opened the door. Danny took the band off the second wallet and opened it, and then stood as still as the monument in Queen's Square.

Small squares of folded paper, dozens of them, a big wallet packed with them. That made a lot of things clear. Danny waited like that till he had fitted the thin packets to some other facts; then he tipped them all onto the table.

The mad woman stopped moaning and the hissing of the gas sounded louder. Danny heard the gate being opened outside. Then the woman screamed.

"Go and talk to her, Sister," the doctor instructed. "It's just a bad dream. If she doesn't calm down I'll give her something."

The sister went out and Danny called the doctor over to the table. "Do you know what is in those little squares of paper?" he asked.

The doctor opened one. He wet his finger and took a few of the white crystals up to his tongue. He said, "Yes, I know what it is, and it explains why Carmody was so violent."

"Maybe," said Danny, "but I don't think so. I don't think he used the stuff himself. He peddled it, and used floosies—each with a line of men on her string—as his agents. The vice squad only got the girls, they never caught up with Carmody."



"I could go with him until something better comes along, but what if something better comes along and sees me going with him?"

Have you ever seen . . .

a refrigerator on wings?

NO? . . . then hasten to Texas . . . there you'll find the "Texas nighthawk" . . . a bird which keeps itself cool just by opening its mouth. U.S. zoologists have discovered that this particular species of bird has a special cooling mechanism in its mouth that allows it to sit all day in the hot desert sun while protecting its eggs. Since the nighthawk has no sweat-glands, cooling is taken care of mostly through the mouth (which comprises more than 15 per cent of the total body area). The scientists explain: "The nighthawk's nesting activity takes place in June when the temperatures on the desert are ranging above 100 degrees. The eggs are incubated in the open where heat would rapidly kill the embryos; therefore the adult bird must remain in the open to shield its eggs." When its body temperature reaches an uncomfortable height, the nighthawk opens its mouth and begins "fanning" with a set of muscles near its throat. Evaporation of moisture covering the oral surfaces lowers the temperature of a large amount of blood which has filled the mouth-vessels for cooling. "Temperature control of this nature means an extravagant water-loss, but the Texas nighthawk sits it out on the hot desert all day, only soaring in search of water after sun-set," the zoologists enthuse.

"That's your affair," the doctor said shortly.

The wardsman came back, and Danny looked up from the pile of snow, and he saw a uniformed man in the doorway. Danny only glanced at him, because he wasn't alone.

Braddon was standing beside him, looking at Danny, and looking dangerous.

Braddon's thin face wasn't pale now. There was a dark flush under the skin; there was a hunter's eagerness in his eyes. They stayed on Danny for a long time, and the woman down the corridor screamed once more, and then grew quiet.

"Carmody's here," Braddon said after a while.

"Yeah, and I'm here, I'm handling it."

"I have to see him, Danny. Where is he?"

"He's not for you. You folded up on it—remember? You're out."

"Because I owe him something, and I can't nail him for murder while I'm in debt to him. I'm going to give it to him now, Danny."

"You're wrong! You're not giving Carmody anything!"

DANNY'S automatic flicked up and covered Braddon. Braddon stared at it, and his eyes came together in surprise, and his lips peeled away from his teeth. "You'd enjoy killing me, wouldn't you, Danny?"

He said it, and then he ducked low and sprang back through the door too fast for Danny's gun to follow him. His feet made no sound on the rubber matting in the corridor. The doctor let out a senseless curse, and the man in uniform grunted, and got out of Danny's way. Danny went through the door after Braddon.

He couldn't see Braddon, but Katie came quickly to the door of her room as if she had seen Braddon streak past, and Danny wheeled back to the day-room.

Nobody in that corridor either, not even the men he had sent to guard Carmody. Danny cursed under his breath; but he still moved cautiously. Braddon could have come this way, or he could have dodged Danny in a dark room in the female wing and come back. Danny passed Wellingford's room, and Wellingford was lying on his bed with his light on. He looked as if he was asleep.

Further along where Carmody was, the doctor, policeman and wardsman were all standing around the bed. The doctor was feeling for a pulse, and the cop jerked up his head when Danny came in. Danny stood there and didn't say anything till the doctor straightened his back, and the doctor looked at Danny and pressed his lips into white thin lines.

"He's dead."

There was the still figure of Carmody. The eyes were wide open, they were staring, and were larger than when he was alive.

"Braddon didn't have time to get here and do it," the doctor said.

Danny knew what he meant. He could see triumph in the doctor's manner.

"Wellingford!" the wardsman groaned. "Gawd! Did I leave Wellingford's door unlocked?"

He darted out, but the doctor wasn't interested, the doctor was looking at Danny. He kept on looking at Danny until Ferguson came back.

"Wellingford's asleep, just like nothing had happened," he said in a voice that was thin and ragged.

"But his door isn't locked. I must have forgot it when the ambulance came with this—"

"Wellingford will confess," the doctor said. "He'll be delighted to confess; he'll be sure he did it. Only—he didn't."

Danny studied the blood-encrusted face of Carmody. It hadn't been cleaned yet, and he couldn't see much through the dried blood. His glance went from the face down to the neck, and it stopped there.

"What was the cause of death?" he asked.

"A blow like you gave him could do a number of things, rupture an artery near his heart, for instance, or—"

"And those thumb-marks on his throat? See? The two spots where the blood has caked off? Who did that?"

The doctor looked at Danny first—a swift, startled look—and then at Carmody's neck. He bent over Carmody again and began another examination.

"You should have let me do it, Danny. I don't blame you, but you should have let me do it."

Braddon was there, in the doorway, boring a hole through Danny with his eyes.

"Didn't you?" Danny asked.

"No, I went the wrong way. But you knew he was mine, that I was after him, and you — you cheated me, Danny."

"He's been strangled!" the doctor said suddenly. His voice was blurred; it was full of doubt. "And neither of you — neither of you had a chance to strangle him."

IT was hard for Danny to think. He had tried to stop Braddon; had wanted to take Carmody alive; but now Carmody was dead; and there was Braddon. Suppose Braddon had managed, somehow, to come straight to this room? It would give him only a few seconds for murder; but there were a few seconds.

"How long does it take, doctor?" Danny asked. "To strangle a man, I mean?"

The doctor looked at Braddon, and then at Danny, and then at Braddon again. He wasn't sure of himself now, the starch had all gone out of him. He made a futile gesture at the corpse, and said, "Braddon didn't have time. The hands that did this weren't very strong, either."

"Then it must have been Wellingford?"

"I'm afraid so." The doctor's shoulders went up in a helpless shrug. "An unbalanced mind, delusions of homicide, and opportunity—." His voice died away.

There was silence. The man in uniform shuffled his feet. Ferguson scratched his ear, and Danny began to feel tired, and ineffective, and useless. The doctor's gaze kept shifting around. It wasn't possible to know what he was thinking.

"This isn't a case for me," Danny said at last. "I'd better phone the Chief; I'm only on the Durant murder."

They went out into the corridor. The warden stopped to lock the door as they moved away. The doctor paused at Wellingford's room, and Ferguson let him into it. Ferguson stayed there while the doctor woke Wellingford up, and Braddon

went with Danny to the day-room.

The sister wasn't there; she would still be with the old woman, Danny supposed. It seemed a long time since she went there, but it wasn't, really. It was no more than a few minutes.

Danny used the telephone and got the Chief, and told him what there was. The Chief said to stay with Braddon, he'd come out himself and take charge. That was bad.

And all the time, Braddon was staring at the heap of cocaine packets on the table. Danny turned away from the telephone, and saw Braddon looking, and he said in a flat voice, "It's from Carmody. Seems like he peddled it."

"There's a lot of it," Braddon said.

Danny picked up a few packets and let them fall back on the table. "I thought there was more than that. I didn't get time to count them, bu—"

"Letters!" Braddon exclaimed. "Danny! Did you — did you look at them?"

Danny shot a glance at Braddon's face, and the hell was in his eyes again. He was reaching for one of the letters.

"It's Lucille's!" he croaked. "She used envelopes like that."

Danny let him take the letter out of the envelope. Danny watched his fingers tremble as he unfolded it. Danny kept very still while Braddon read the note.

"You'll need this," Braddon said. He handed it to Danny, and then he slumped into a chair and put his head in his hands.

It was Lucille's writing, and when

Danny read it he knew how Braddon felt.

There wasn't any love in it. It just said: "I'll meet you in the park, and I want the stuff. God knows how I want it! But I'm through working for you. I know what it's done to me; I won't drag more men down into this hell, and you can't make me do it. Don't try! Remember Danny King? And Luke Braddon? They both like the sound of my voice. They'd love it even more if I talk to them now."

As if it didn't matter, Braddon said, "He didn't think she'd talk. He was going to shove a dose of snow under her nose and watch her crumble, and agree to — anything!"

"Yeah, I guess that's why he made such a mess of the murder, he wasn't ready for it. How did he cut his head?"

"Pretended to be drunk and fell through a plateglass window, then fought like a maniac when the ambulance came for him."

"I thought it was like that," Danny said, but it wasn't important now, nothing was important now. "It gave him an alibi for the blood on his clothes."

The sister came to the room. She glanced at the two men and went on with what she was doing when the old woman screamed, getting things ready for stitching Carmody's head.

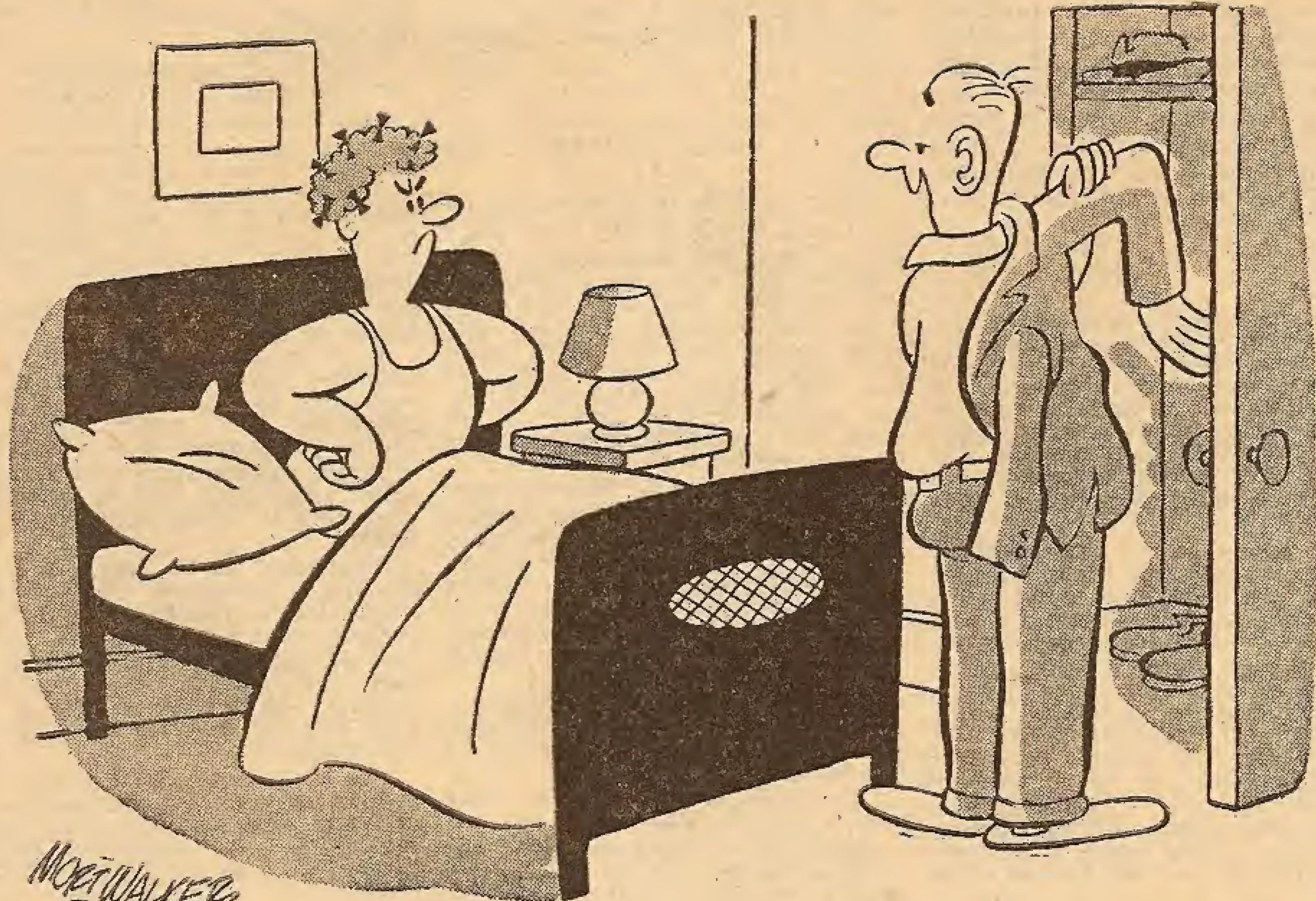
"Relax yourself, Sister," Danny said. "Save it for a guy that isn't dead."

"Dead? You mean the drunk who—?"

The doctor came to the door and interrupted her. His voice was like



"For a while there I thought you were sound asleep!"



"I have a wonderful excuse, I won."

tissue-paper. "That's right, Sister. Someone strangled Carmody while he was strapped down."

THERE was something new in the doctor's face, something like fear, as if he had been talking to ghosts and had felt their fingers cold on his forehead.

"And it wasn't Wellingford," he added. "Wellingford swears he did it; of course, he's all worked up because I won't believe him; but he says he smashed Carmody's skull with part of the iron bedstead. So —you see!"

He looked at the jumble on the table. He didn't look at Danny, or at Braddon, or at the sister, and Danny began to feel a chill streak on the back of his neck. The warden came in, and stood near the door. The sister stared at Danny with her glinting black eyes.

"Give Wellingford a sedative, Sister, and make it strong," the doctor said. "Go with her, Ferguson; you may have to force him to take it."

He moved uncertainly to the door. "There's nothing more for me here. I'll let myself out."

He went, and Danny heard him unlocking the door. The sister measured something into a glass and Ferguson went down the corridor with her. Braddon was sitting per-

fectly still, gazing at the cocaine-packets, but not seeing anything. The hell had gone out of his eyes, and he looked as if everything else had gone out of him along with it.

He said, "You still hate me, Danny?"

"Of course."

"As much as I hated Carmody?"

"I don't know. I think so."

Braddon turned empty eyes on Danny. "You've got your gun," he said. "It would be easy for you to kill me."

"Maybe," Danny said, "but it isn't worth it. And you didn't murder Carmody."

"No, I didn't get Carmody. That's the senseless part of it. I intended to. I intended to give myself up and go to the chair for it, and now I'm left in the back-draught. There isn't anything, Danny. I haven't even got what you've got. I don't even hate anybody."

Danny was only half listening to Braddon. Down in the men's wing, he could hear Wellingford raising his voice; he could hear the domineering commands of the sister. They were having trouble making Wellingford take the mixture. And Wellingford hadn't murdered Carmody, and Braddon hadn't, and there wasn't anyone else, only—

"You know, I could kill you, Danny," Braddon was saying, "or you'd use your gun and kill me. You don't want to die, but it won't matter to me which way it is. You kill me, or they do for me for murdering you. Either way—" He threw out his hands meaninglessly.

He might do it. A man can live in hell, Danny knew, but he can't live without anything; he can't stand the emptiness Danny saw in Braddon now. And Braddon's hand was under his coat where he kept his gun.

Danny got up. He said, "Listen to me! There's a girl in here — Katie Prentice. She's supposed to be cured, and she isn't locked up, and she—"

But Braddon wasn't listening, and Danny turned his back. Braddon's hand was still on his gun, his face was grey again. Danny went to the door, and Braddon got up and followed him. Danny went along the corridor to Katie's room. The door was open; the room was dark. He switched on the light.

Katie was naked. She was putting her foot into some pale-green flimsies and she stayed like that when the light went on—bent over, her hands holding a whisp of green somewhere about her knee. Her gown and night-

dress were thrown on the bed, her clothes were hung over a chair. She turned her face up and saw Danny and Braddon.

"Come in, boys," she said. "I'm getting dressed to go out, and you can help me. You've both got master-keys."

She was different. She was more vivid, with an unnatural sparkle that hadn't been on her before. Danny's gaze drifted over her curved back. It went to her feet, to the floor near her feet. It fixed on some little wads of crumpled paper scattered there. He heard Braddon's breath coming fast. He looked at Braddon, and Braddon's eyes weren't empty now.

Braddon said, "Holy God! And you—you use it, too!"

Katie put her other foot in the flimsie and stood erect. She saw the direction of Danny's gaze, and her own eyes went to the crumpled squares of paper. She faced them both with a flush on her cheeks.

"Sure! Sure I use it! They cured me here; they were sending me out tomorrow, you know. And I had it all fixed to get away, to keep away from it. But Carmody wouldn't let me! He slashed his head just so he could get in here and get hold of me before I went!"

"Hold it!" Danny rapped. "You stole that snow from the day-room. Carmody didn't force it on to you."

"Didn't he? Didn't he?" Her voice rose. "Goddam it, he looked at me while I choked him, kept looking at me all the time he was dying! He was strapped to his bed, he couldn't move, I was squeezing his throat so he couldn't speak, but he looked at me. Did you ever have a man looking at you while you were murdering him? A man you had loved? A



"Well, if you're really serious about the girl, I suppose we can give you some sort of executive title. Understand, though, when I yell 'Boy,' I still want you."

man you had gone to hell for? God, but I had to have something after that! If it hadn't been there, on the table, with no one to stop me—But it was! Now, get me out of here! Get me away—"

"Sure, you'll be away from it," Danny said. "We arrest people for murder, even for murdering Carmody. Get dressed!"

The girl's face twisted and her lips curled out. Her hands became claws; but it was Braddon who acted. He sprang, seized her hands and held her helpless.

"Take it easy," he said. "You're all stacked up now, but you'll get over that. And they won't send you to the chair—not when they've heard my story!"

The girl let him hold her wrists. She looked at his face and seemed to sense the tragedy that was in it. "I don't know you," she said. "Or do I?"

"We had bad dreams," Braddon told her. "We both had the same bad dreams, and now we're waking up together. Get your clothes on. Danny and me are going to take care of you."

The fool! A girl like Katie Prentice! Not even Braddon with all his strength, his hard, driving will, could pull her back off the slippery-slide!

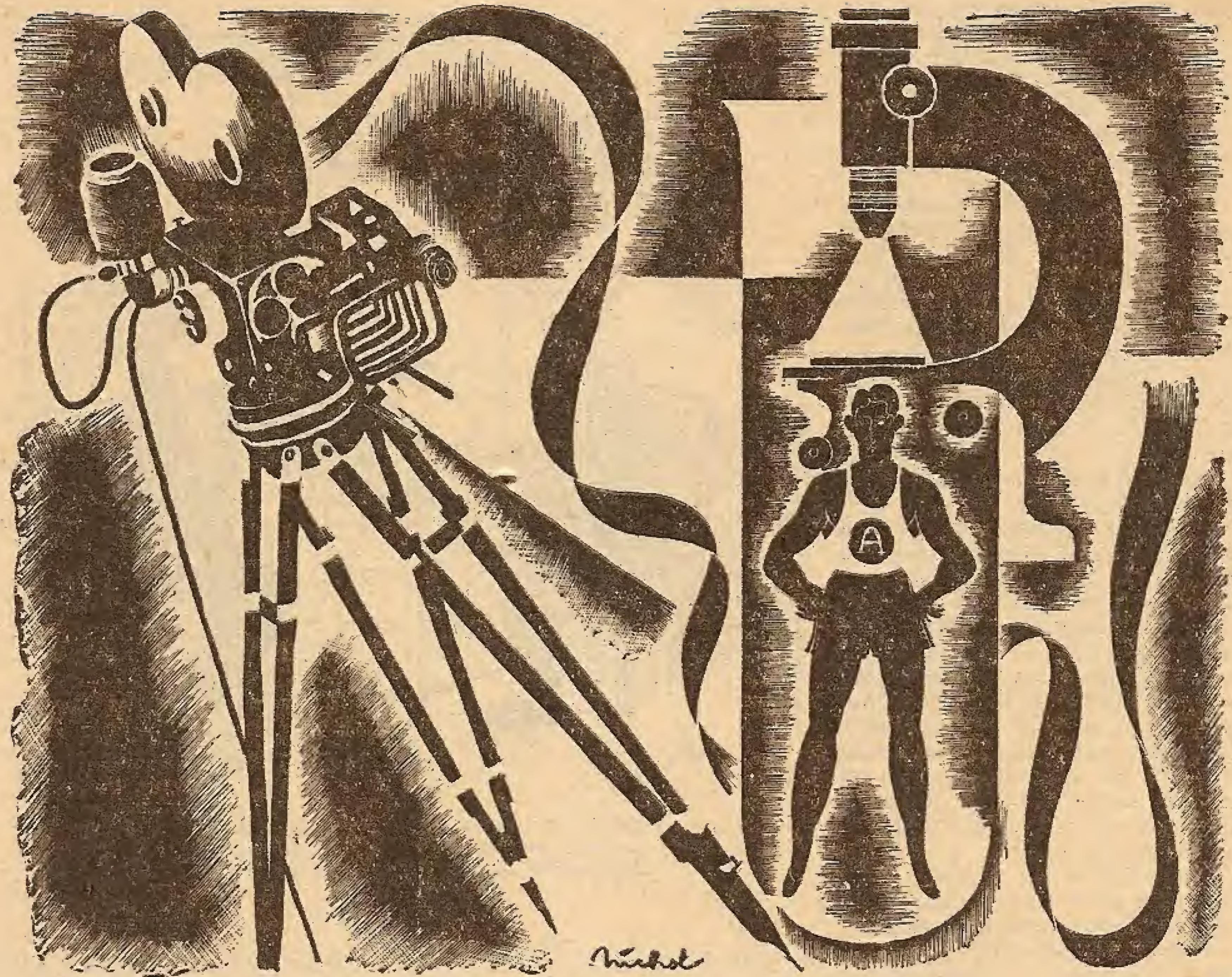
They were both standing perfectly still, looking at each other, and Danny began to wonder. After all, maybe Braddon could. Danny began to hope that he would.

And then he knew that he didn't hate Braddon any more, and it made him feel good inside. He could go fishing now. The trout he caught wouldn't taste bitter.

And so, road-hogs...

who is the worst driver?

RESTRAIN yourselves...we have the authority of Professor A. R. Lauer, of Iowa (US) State college that the most dangerous age for car drivers is 21, and not teen-agers (as the current libel runs). Moreover, Professor Lauer has also advanced the shattering statement that men can drive better than women...but they don't. According to the Professor, the difference in accident susceptibility is statistically small when considered in relation to miles driven. He found in addition that women were better drivers than men from the ages of 16 to 33, that men were better drivers than women from 33 to 40; and that women were better drivers from 41 to 53. Over the age of 55, however, men have fewer accidents, on a mileage basis. In general (the Professor assessed) men have more skill than women; but women between 17 and 28 have one-fourth fewer accidents for a given mileage than men of the same age group. From the standpoint of safety (and from an actuarial point of view)...the Professor deduced...men aged between 20 and 24 constitute the chief offenders.



WHAT MAKES A CHAMP?

The new technique is to build the champ's body to the requirements that are likely to give him victory in the big event.

SPORT • FACT

★ By S. G. EBERT

COME ON, you quiz addicts? Just what attributes add up to championship class? Why could Big Jake Kramer beat anybody in the world at tennis? How is it that Merv Wood hasn't a sculling rival worthy to be called such? Why has Walter Lindrum, king of the Cue, something that obviously was not included in the make-up of his billiards opponents? And don't leap for an answer. There are dozens of these invincibles.

In the realms where man competes against distance, height and time, we still ask our awkward questions. Why was Jesse Owens able to broad-jump farther than anybody else and hurdle faster than any opposition recorded? Hironshon Furuhashi, of Tokio, last year churned

through the water at a rate that worried American swimming coaches and Olympic selectors who had been confident in US supremacy at least over the shorter distances.

Is it that the champion has developed a technique of operation that is better than that of any of his competitors? Many sports fans (amateur and otherwise) have been searching for answers to such questions for years. They have found lots of reasons for the continuous improvement in standards year after year; and now they are searching for ways and means of raising those standards still higher.

Yet when they consult the sport record books they find America has very frequent mention. Sweden and Finland also have their share of

prominence. But what of Australia? Young John Marshall has forced Australia's name back on to the schedule of the world's foremost swimming nations, hasn't he? Strange that one solitary young athlete can give the impression abroad that his home country is a breeding ground for world-beating water artists. Strange, perhaps, at first thought, but Master Marshall is a world's champion of the de luxe category, and some half century ago Australia was really respected wherever the call was "Face the water! Go!" no matter what the language might have been. Furthermore, the young Victorian is enjoying the most modern training methods practised in the world today—the results of many years of study and research.

At the turn of the century, Australians pioneered the crawl stroke, whose introduction caused the greatest revolution known to the history of any sport. Our forbears pioneered and developed the stroke; but America and Japan and other nations applied the analysis and efficiency formulae and produced streamlined techniques and super-champions which left our water-lapped little continent (and its representatives) far, far in the rear.

With the application of science to the perfecting of style, there has come also a scientific attitude to the individual swimmers themselves. In training, the megaphone has been largely supplanted by the microscope; the deep-chested burliness of the baths attendant is replaced by the academic stoop of the professor.

The crawl stroke kept Australian swimmers on top for twenty-five years, after fourteen-year-old Solomon Islander, Alec Wickham, had startled and intrigued onlookers with his native "tuppa tuppala" stroke at Bronte Baths, Sydney, in 1897.

"Look at that boy crawling over the water," someone said—and the crawl was christened and here to stay.

Dick Cavill and Barney Keiran took over the new style in preference to the old trudgeon; and the gentlemen who amend record books were very busy for a year or two.

WHEN the Yanks went to work on the Australian crawl, they gave it a six-beat kick and produced one of the stroke's greatest exponents. They brought him from Hawaii. He was Duke Kahanamoku. The Duke had something more than perfection of technique to justify his position as champion of swimming champions. He was a "natural." He had the right build and form and he loved the water. He had loved it since a happy island childhood, which had featured hours and hours of surf-board riding, frolicking and racing in blue, South Sea waters. He came to Australia in 1914 and swam 100 yards in the world record time of 53.8 seconds. The crowd at the Domain Baths (Sydney) that afternoon knew then that the American kick was a "must" for aspiring champions.

So the concentration on improvement in technique continued, and records kept toppling. After the 1914-18 war, Andrew ("Boy") Charlton invaded the international swimming scene with a strange but powerful kick. He used a trudgeon crawl and a leg-beat that combined both styles

and was good enough to take the Olympic title over 1500 metres in 1924.

JUST 20 years ago this year, Japan gave the swimming world a shock at the 1932 Olympic Games at Los Angeles. The Nips had decided beforehand that their body shape and size should suit them for good swimming. Before the Games they invited a group of Australian and American topliners to pay them a visit. Charlton wasn't available; but Australians Ern Henry, Vic Moore and Reg Grier made the trip with

throughout the world sat in stunned silence for days.

The Japanese had introduced a new seriousness to preparation for international sport and the road to records. Thereafter, the camera became an important item in the equipment of a topflight trainer; but more important was the new approach to sport activity, evidenced (particularly in the USA) after the Games shock of 1932.

A collection of some of the most brilliant brains in the country undertook the task of discovering just what made a performer a champion.

They also sought ways and means of generally forcing up the national sport standard. We'll have more to say about this new physical education later.

Of course, swimming wasn't the only sport which has found itself subject to progressive changes of technique over the years. In track and field athletics, most radical style changes have been found in the high jump. American E. R. Clark won the 1896 Olympic title with a mighty leap of 5ft 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. He was hailed as something of a superman at the time. Today his effort would scarcely qualify him for a senior schoolboys' competition. Lester Steers (USA) holds the world's record at 6ft 11in. Last century—and for much of this—the only high jumping style known and practised was the scissors form. Then came the Eastern cut-off and the Western Roll with its straddle, giving the jumper an efficient body layout crossing the bar—and up went the standard.

Broadjumping is another athletics event which has progressed remarkably with the adoption of new styles. Fifty-odd years ago the long jump record was less than 21ft. Best performance on record nowadays is Jesse Owens' 26ft 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. New broadjumping methods aim at moving the body during flight so that the athlete lands with feet thrust well forward and the body swung forward over them. This balanced and forward thrust on landing can add feet to the broadjumper's effort.

The hitch-kick is another recently developed style favored by many leading long-jumpers. It involves a running movement in the air. The Japanese also entered the international broadjumping field. They brought with them the "delayed hanging in the air" technique, which has been largely adopted by Australian broadjumpers.

The Finns have treated javelin-throwing with a studious attitude which matches the Japanese approach to swimming. Their ability with the hunting spear has meant, for them, food, clothes and material for trade and barter. Finnish experts spent years in perfecting the styles which progressively raised the 1906 figure of Lemming, the Swede—an effort 175 feet 7 inches—to the present world's record of 258 feet 2 3-8 inches. The javelin-hurling record-holder is, of course, a Finn. His name is Y. Nikkanen, and his best throw was made back in 1938.

So it has been in all sports for decades. A change in technique established a champion nation . . . and that nation's best exponent of the new technique became a world's

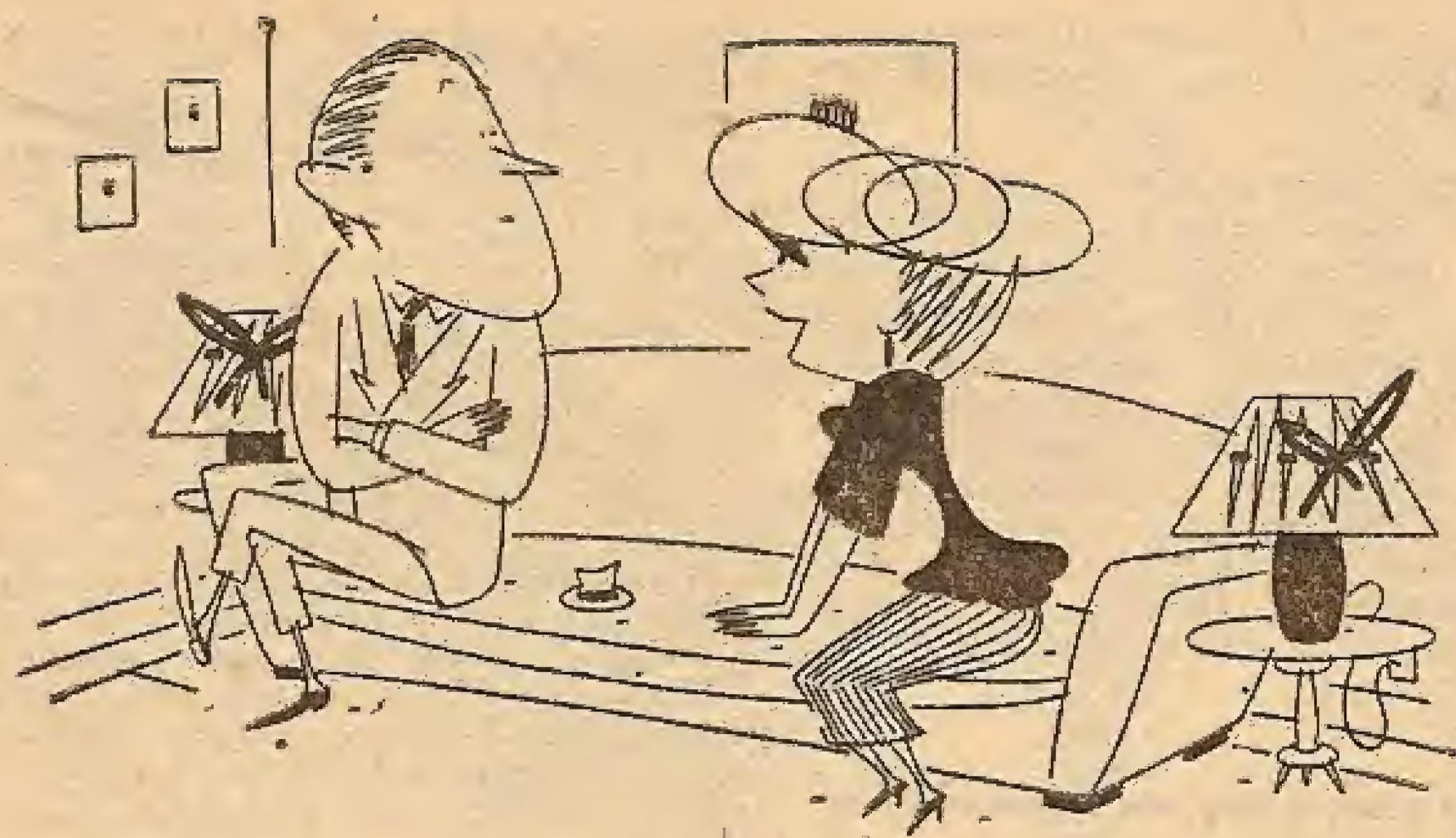
Who first named our ... days of the week?

THE names for the days of the week are Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon in origin, though the idea did not originate with the European northerners. Evidently they got the idea from early Romans and merely translated the Latin names. Sunday, for instance, is from "dies solis" (day of the sun) and Monday from "lunae dies" (day of the moon). But when it came to Tuesday, the Roman's day for Mars (the God of War), the Norse changed it to their own war god, Tyr, calling it "Tyr's Day." They also changed "Mercury" Day to Woden's Day (Wednesday) after the chief Norse War God; Thursday celebrated Thor, god of thunder; Friday was named after Woden's wife, Frig or Freya (Goddess of Marriage). However, the Norse then ran out of gods (or grew tired of translating), so that the Roman Saturn's Day became the sixth... Sunday.

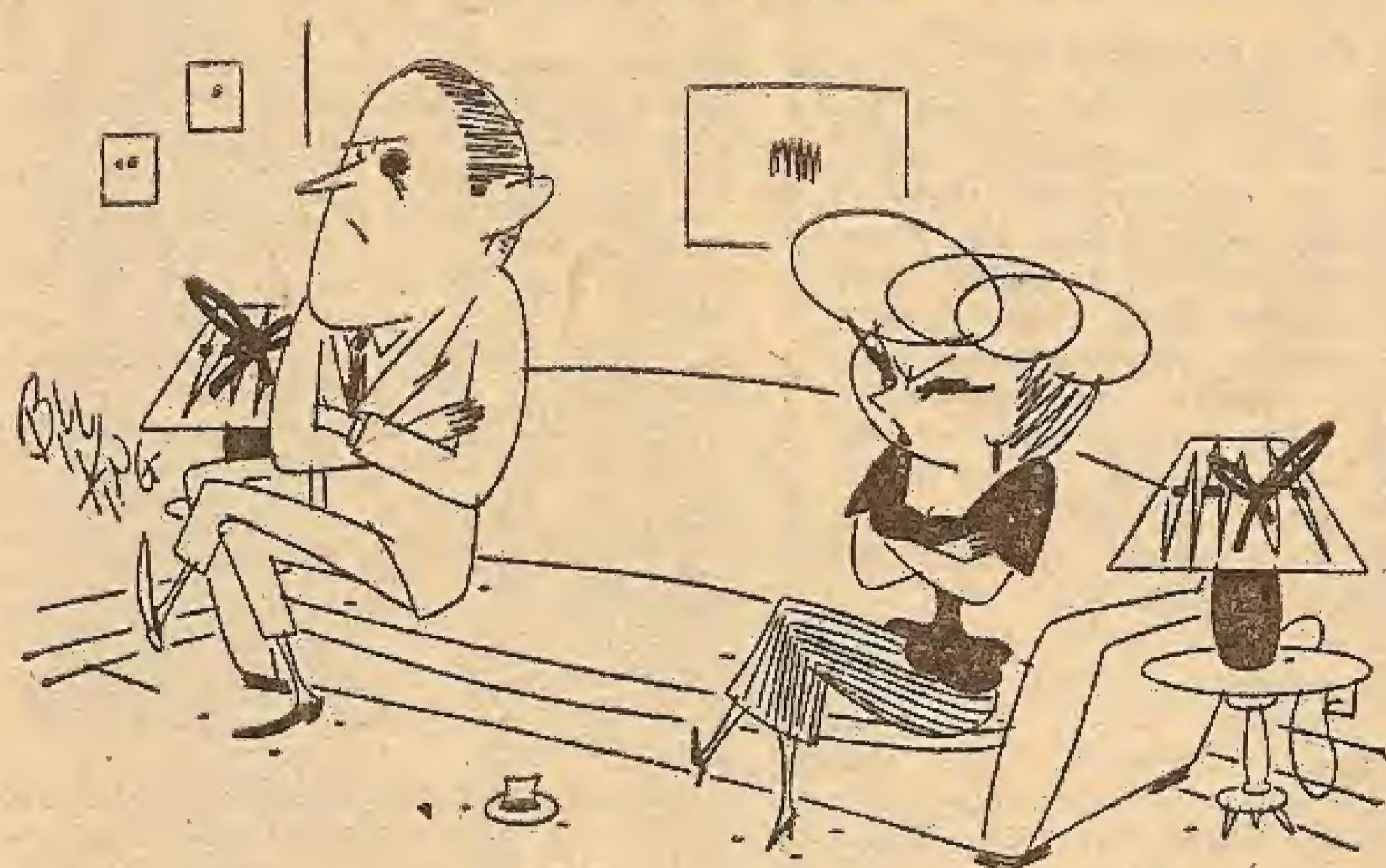
an American team which included "Buster" Crabbe. The Japs kept the movie cameras turning every time any member of the party hit the water. They shot them on the pontoons, and both on and under the water—mostly in slow motion.

When the visitors had been farewelled, the Nipponese natatorial brains trust settled down to long sessions of studying their styles. It was decided that if anything was to be learned, "Buster" Crabbe was the man to teach it. The films of the Australians and of the rest of the American team were discarded, and the film-following experts proceeded to learn more about "Buster" Crabbe's technique than that muscular young man has ever discovered himself.

The story of the swimming shocks at the 1932 Games has now been told many times. The Japanese team arrived with a brand-new style which featured the Crabbe form fundamentally, but was different in the recovery action. The Jap recovery was faster. They went home with a bag of Olympic medals and new world's records, and coaches



"Tonight, let's do what you want to do."



champion. The places of honor are held until there occurs another brand of the sport concerned — another style of play.

IF you are a Rugby League follower, you certainly have not forgotten the French Rugby League team which toured Australia and New Zealand last year. They had looked forward with enthusiastic anticipation to meeting Australian teams and learning how the game really should be played. What a shock we suffered — players, spectators and critics. The journalists said that the visitors were wizards. They were delightful and entralling. Their combination, as well as individual play, was a revelation! The Frenchmen had not been dulled by regular contact with other international teams.

As the fleet Francois saw the game, the idea was to advance the ball down the field, with the object of forcing it behind the goal-line of the opposition. To them that was simple enough. Primary requirement was possession of the ball, and possession of the ball had to be maintained in such a way that the opponents were not able to take it away.

They tossed that ball from one to another as though it were threaded to an imaginary line. From scrum-half to centre it travelled; and if the centre three-quarter was not able to penetrate the defence, the ball

came back, still in the hands of the attackers.

To the French players it was just too rudimentary, but to our stalwarts, it was a new brand of football. The visitors won the series. Their victory was due to their technique. It was new to our boys. Once again an improved technique won the day — in fact, it won several days.

It has been similar in all other sports. During the cricket season just completed, our batsmen faced a brand of slow bowling which was a stranger to them. A diminutive, brown little member of the West Indies team turned the ball both ways, but was regarded as something of a cheat as he didn't bowl an orthodox wrong 'un. "Sonny" Ramadhin was the character ... and little "Sonny" apologetically explained that he just couldn't bowl a leg-break with an off-break action. He bowled both breaks with the same action, and that single action was different from any that the locals had ever encountered.

It disguised both deliveries; and their problem was not to pick the bosey, but to make the correct guess about either spin.

Dark-skinned Freddy Dawson invaded our shores (and our boxing rings) a couple of times. He disposed of our best pugs and decamped again for the Land of Dollars. Freddy was a fast and terrific puncher, whose lethal *thump* was

delivered according to a pattern that was often quite foreign to the dictates of the copybook. He threw them fast, often and successfully from positions that happened to be convenient to the temporary stance of his wiry, ebony body. Much of Dawson's pugilistic success undoubtedly came from his ability to produce the unexpected.

IN a discussion of changes of technique and resultant champions of the consequent new order, the tennis game must receive honorable mention. For years the steady, dependable back-line player took the trophies. Your good player was expected to stroke them back with accurate, fluent artistry and consistency. Then came the "big" game. The era of the cannon-ball and the overhead game. The violent net-rushing and devastating smash brought a new type of champion, and the game still carries his image. Who knows just what new style of play might be presented by some new champion this year, next year or sometime? And, then, no doubt, he will be copied by somebody who will supersede him.

A USTRALIAN coach, all-rounder and scientist, Forbes Carlile, has stated what he considers to be the answer to the riddle of superlative performance in the water — What makes a swimming champion?

"As it is true of all human activities," wrote Carlile, "So it is in swimming. We can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

"Suitable body build is a fundamental requisite; or at least the in-born potentiality to develop the necessary physique. Sometimes the youngster's body takes more or less its final shape early in life. If other characteristics are present in a sufficient degree, we have a swimming prodigy who makes his mark early and develops speed and endurance ... improving with each season. Others attaining this suitable build hold it for a while and flash into the swimming limelight for only a year or two.

"Let's look at the build of our champion.

"To start with, the swimmer will generally strike one as being heavy for his height. The runner (with the occasional exception of the pure sprinter) and the great majority of champion swimmers are poles apart in physical appearance. One needs no expert knowledge to distinguish the lean, greyhound-like runner; the tall, muscular rower; the compact, heavily-muscled weight-lifter or the rounded, chunky body of the swimmer.

"The 'roundness' of the champion swimmer means that he has more adipose tissue (fat) in a layer beneath the skin. He can afford to carry this extra weight because the water, not his legs, has to support his weight. The fat has the important function of lowering the specific gravity of the body, and thus helps it to float. It also helps keep the swimmer warm, acting as insulation. The Channel swimmer knows this."

AS far back as 1932, swimming coaches in the United States had introduced a floating test by which to classify their prospective champions. The test sorted the subjects into three groups: swimmers, middle distance and distance racers. The men being tested

floated face down in the water, with arms outstretched. A variation was found in the distance between the heels and the surface of the water. That was the index to the floating man's most suitable competitive distance. The likely 1500m. champions invariably floated with their heels near or at the surface. The sprinter's heels were lowest, and the heels of the possible 400m. team man, of course, reached a depth some halfway between the other two.

All this floating business concerns "specific gravity." And while we're being all scientific about the subject, we'll call Professor Frank Cotton into the discussion. We couldn't have a better man than he. Sport Scientist Cotton is Professor of Physiology at Sydney University; he was a champion swimmer in his pre-professorial days.

Prof. Cotton doesn't gainsay the importance of the specific gravity of the body. By no means, but—in that insidiously mild way of his—he does point out that it is only one aspect. He once collected the heights and weights of more than a thousand students so that he could assess an average build. After careful study of records and students, he evolved a formula which calculated an index of build. It is:

Height 3 (in inches).

Weight x 22 (in pounds).

Maybe it looks fearsome at first glance, but it is really fairly simple—and very handy for calculating probable adaptability to sport. It merely means that you take the cube of a man's height in inches and divide the result by his weight in pounds multiplied by 22.

Thus an extremely lean subject would be calculated at something more than, for instance, 130; while a really fat fellow could reach 35 or 40.

The test was applied to a large group of all-round track athletes, who averaged close to the 100 mark. The leaner men (who strode over the long distances, such as the five miles, 10 miles and the marathon) were indexed at approximately 110.

Nearly all outstanding swimmers show an index of build of below 100. Furuhashi (who is 5ft 9in tall and 11st 11lb) indexed at 90.5. Our own John Marshall (who is now 12st 4lb) was calculated at 94½.

Most Australians remember Professor Cotton's tests with his cycling ergometer and his rowing ergometer. He used the latter machine to select, from a crowd of novices, a crew of four. There were two boys who had recently left school and two men who had never pulled a skiff. He combined them; at the end of a single season the "guinea pig" four won both junior and senior State titles.

The Professor's marathon tests also intrigued an inquisitive public. Interviewed on the day of the 1950 marathon championship in Sydney, he stated:—

"We have been taking blood tests from these athletes because the changes that take place in the blood under the stress of exercise have a deep significance in body efficiency. The body under stress of exercise is similar to the body struggling against disease. For instance, the white cells in the blood may even double in number during strenuous exercise. We must remember that the white cells in the blood help us to combat

disease. Today's marathon race is providing a unique opportunity for observation of characteristic blood changes."

When Marshall commenced his sojourn at Yale University under the control of perhaps the world's greatest swimming coach, Bob Kiphuth, he was a willowly 10st 12lb. The American was generally satisfied with Marshall's style, but he considered that the youngster should use a more powerful arm pull. Marshall was not built with a powerful upper body, so Coach Kiphuth decided to alter his build and overcome this minor deficiency.

John Marshall spent a full season without swimming competitively; but he worked harder than any other student on the swimming squad. There was ground work, weight work, group and individual work, and there were hours of exercising with the pulley weights. The result was a new John Marshall . . . deep-chested, chunky-shouldered, and whose arm drag could rival that of "Tarzan" Weissmuller, champion of yester-year.

Then the records started to topple.

But the exercise didn't cease. In a letter to Forbes Carlile, the Victorian wrote from Yale: "Using a heavy medicine ball (16lb) we sit and throw it over our heads 100 times, then between our legs 100 times. Then 150 to 200 times with high pulleys, sideways with each arm and with both arms down the middle 200 times. All this is fast. This after half an hour of flat-out calisthenics! Then we started swimming training."

That is a sample of Bob Kiphuth's formula—the system which has

pepped Marshall up to world standard. Would an Australian trainer use the same methods? Would an Australian trainee do what he was told by such a coach?

ONE of the most outstanding physical educationists alive today is Dr. Thomas K. Cureton, of Springfield, USA. The sport-minded doctor, like our own Professor Cotton, has applied hundreds of tests to thousands of athletes, and he has studied sheaves of photographs of past champions. He discovered that there was a similarity of build among the top-notchers of certain sports. Jumpers, high hurdlers and pole vaulters have longer than average length of leg from the knee down. They also have greater overall leg length in relation to the body.

Weight-lifters and wrestlers have short limbs compared with length of body trunk. Most divers are in the same group. The typical record-breaking sprinter is a well-muscled man built on the lithe pattern.

It would seem that the learned gentry who have applied science to sport performance have pointed out that one of the first essentials for a champion is that he should be built to suit the requirements of his sport.

Naturally a coach plays an important part in production of the best possible performance from his charge. In this regard Dean E. Cromwell (of the University of Southern California and coach of the US Olympic athletes) was without peer. He was a legendary make of champions and a magical dispenser of optimism. Months before departure time, Cromwell proclaimed his absolute certainty that his team would win the Games, even though current figures showed that over-



"Well, yes. It looks like my signature. Why?"



"Oh, how lovely! I'll wear it always."

seas athletes were better than the US boys in several events.

Cromwell knew what he was doing. His history proves that he has an uncanny power to coax a phenomenal improvement from a team member at a big meeting.

MODERN coaching aids are as important to the success of a champion as is the presence of a capable coach.

In America motion pictures have been used for some time by coaches of professional sports teams, particularly in grid-iron football, track and field sports, baseball and swimming and diving. Some of America's most outstanding coaches of inter-collegiate athletics have expressed their opinions of the use of motion pictures as coaching aids.

"We take moving pictures of all the games" wrote one college football coach. "We have them developed and sent back to us about Tuesday noon. An announcement is made to the squad that the pictures will be shown at 2.30 on Tuesday afternoon. The squad is not expected as a whole to be at the showing, but those men who have free time come to see them. We usually have about a third of the squad looking at the picture.

"We find that there is a great deal that escapes us during the game that we can check up on Tuesday ... the players who are there notice very forcibly certain mistakes that they made. Then again, in our spring practice, we will let the men look at themselves in the past season's games. We have made a habit of taking a movie of our final spring scrimmage, and early in the fall, we show that several times and let the boys see themselves in action. They sometimes make mistakes on the field, of which it is hard to convince them, but when these mistakes flash up on the screen, they cannot help being convinced."

Such a use of the 16 mm stock is of immense value to the sports coach (team and individual); but the expense involved would make it impractical for the Australian trainer or club. The bank accounts of most endowed colleges in the States are groaning under the weight of dollars, poured in from legacies bestowed by deceased millionaires.

Ray Wolf, Head Football Coach of the University of North Carolina, must have been able to say: "Hang (or something) the expense" when the subject was making instructional film. He shot more than 25,000 feet of 16 mm film on football during one college year—and that was back in 1937-38. Coach Wolf claims: "We have found that a boy, seeing himself in action, will study his particular style of play ... and will improve upon it."

DARTMOUTH College (USA) was for many years renowned for its athletic prowess on the track. The Dartmouth Track Coach also emphasised the value of the film as a coaching assistant: "We use moving pictures extensively in teaching our boys in track. We have a fairly good collection which we have taken and have divided the pictures as follows, according to groups:— Running events, hurdling events, jumping events, weight events, relay events. By this method we do not have to go through a lot of films to show the

respective athletes their own events. It saves time and we can run these pictures over several times, until the boys grasp the technique, etc. I might add that sometimes it takes many showings before the fellows get the right methods imprinted in their minds. One or two showings are not much help.

"It helps a lot, simply because the boys do not readily grasp our verbal instructions; when they see the pictures a few times they can grasp what we continually try to tell them."

Members of the American Olympic Diving Team (which represented the States at the 1936 Games at Berlin) were literally trained on acetate

tralia seemed to be lagging behind America and the continent in the race of improvement.

He gives six reasons:

(1) Appreciation of the importance of relaxation; conscious striving for greater efficiency of individual movements; and conservation of energy when endurance is important.

At one time (he states) the tendency for a tiring but determined runner to tense the body muscles was pandered to. Athletes were even encouraged to carry handgrips. Nowadays they are advised to retain a mental attitude of determination but to resist the urge to tense the muscles. Champions in any sport make it look easy because they are relaxed.

IN sprinting — particularly over the last 20 yards of a 100-yard race — it is important to make fast but relaxed movements. Jesse Owens, holder of world sprint records, speaks of coasting in a 100yd race. Former NZ champion Lovelock talked of the times when, near the end of middle-distance events, he used to repeat to himself "Relax, Relax, Relax."

(2) In the US, where there are many top class sprinters, men who can't win sprint titles change to other events.

Examples include Towns and Dillard (star hurdlers) and Cornelius Johnson. Johnson had beaten Empire Games sprint winner Cyril Holmes (Britain) but turned to high jumping; in 1936 he won the Olympic title.

In Australia in the past a low sprinting standard had the opposite effect.

(3) Better understanding of methods of training to bring an athlete into top condition for competition.

(4) Intense oversea competition resulting in athletes being sifted into events for which their physique is best suited. Tall men for high jumps, big men for field events such as throwing, and so on.

Rose (US) — the first man to put the shot more than 50ft — was 6ft 5in and weighed 20 stone.

Three US pole-valuters at the 1936 Olympics were 6ft 2in. One of them, E. Meadows, won with a leap of 14ft 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The first four placegetters in the high jump at Berlin in 1936 were men over 6ft — Johnson 6ft 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in, Britten 6ft 3in and Thurder 6ft 5in (US); and Cotkos (Finland) 6ft 4in.

In contrast, Australian high jump champions have been shorter men, except our present Olympic champion, John Winter (Western Australia), who is nearly 6ft 4in.

(5) Finance, which enables American organisations to provide the best training.

(6) Continental Government's appreciation of the importance of organised amateur athletic sport in building good citizens through the discipline entailed.

There you have it! If you are correctly built, have the innate ability, have mastered the most efficient technique, are handled by one of the best coaches, have been passed by the scientists—and if you really are any good — Australia may have a world beater in its midst. Go to it, Champ!

Come, medicos, who was... the first anaesthetist?

THE Chinese (who seem to have been first in many things) had effective anaesthetics many years before they were known to white people. Which Chinese first used the anaesthetic has not been recorded; but the technique remains. The Chinese surgeon merely knocked the patient unconscious with a hammer and carried on. The first (general) anaesthetic as we know it was "sul-ether," it was first used in December, 1841, and January, 1842 by Dr. Crawford W. Long, of Jefferson, Georgia (US). In March, 1842, he placed an ether-soaked pad over the face of James M. Venable and removed a tumor from the man's brain. His fee? Two dollars twenty-five cents.

film stock. A slow-motion picture of the complete Olympic diving routine was used to familiarise them with the requirements of judges and committee. J. Robert Hubbard, an American journalist cum coach, wrote an article in the American Cinematographer a decade ago. Its title was: "Coaching an Olympic Team with Movies."

Among other things the instructive writing man stated: "Even if you are an Olympic champion and can do all the dives to perfection, it takes more than pantomime or demonstration to put over the fact that in one dive — just as you are three-quarters through your second backward somersault — you throw your head forward; while in another dive, which looks exactly like the first, you throw your head backward."

Mr. Hubbard, unlike his married female namesake of nursery rhyme fame, seems to have been a character who carried a solid stock of the right ideas in his cupboard.

Australia's leading athletic coach authority and ex-Olympian, Jack Metcalfe, also has an explanation why athletic performances were continuing to improve; and why Aus-

WESTERN STORIES

THE KILLER COME BACK—
TO SLAKE HIS HATRED ON
THE SONS OF THE MAN
WHO BROUGHT HIM TO BOOK

SQUATTING on his heels, the .30-30 propped against his knees, Ben Hathlow rolled another cigarette. The sand around him was littered with brown paper butts, smoked close to the high-water mark of his lips, and an empty tobacco bag lay among them. But he had almost a full sack left, enough to see him through.

Judging by the sun, noon was still two hours away. It was going to be another scorcher, but Ben knew how to endure it. He had stood worse than this, on the road gang where he had spent most of his six-year term. The road gang had taught Ben to take things easy, and to wait.

A shadow swept toward him across the small, brush-covered ravine below. Ben brought the rifle up across his knee. But it was only the shadow of one of the three buzzards which had been attracted there by the two dead horses which lay, still saddled and bridled, in the ravine. Near them was the cold ash heap that had been a branding fire.

The shadow flitted past and Ben relaxed.

Nothing moved. Ben finished the cigarette and stood up for a look around, to make sure no one was slithering this way. No wonder they called this small, alkali-poisoned, sun-blasted inferno the Hellhole!

His eyes returned to the brush, and Ben's face twitched with a flicker of impatience. Down there, Sam Goodsell's son and stepson hid like varmints from his rifle, cowering under the dry, dusty brush, trying to fade into the natural color of the sand like a pair of horned toads. A whole day they had been there.

"But it won't be long, no more," Ben whispered, squatting again.

Sam Goodsell had been the prosecutor who sent Ben up for one-to-ten on a compromise jury verdict, for killing his sweetheart with a rifle, from a hundred yards behind her. Circumstantial evidence was all he had, yet Ben ran when Sam sent for

him, and they had to send a posse after him. And in court Sam hammered away at that flight, calling Ben names that only a Texas judge would tolerate.

Six years! Now Sam's son and stepson were cowering down there in the brush, and Ben was waiting for thirst and raw nerves to drive them out. He did not dare go into the brush after them, because the stepson had a gun, a .45.

But he could wait.

IT was now just forty-eight hours since Ben had ridden into Sunup, sixteen miles to the south-west. He tied in front of the general store and went inside.

"Howdy," Ben said, and it was his first word since he told the warden, "Sure, sure. All right," when they discharged him.

Both men awakened. The clerk jumped up, yawning. "Howdy, stranger. Caught us taking our siesta. Something I can do for you?"

Ben bought two sacks of tobacco, partly to pave the way for questions, partly because he needed it. He had learned tobacco's deep, satisfying solace on the road gang. A man could build up his time, day by day, simply by forgetting how long it really was, and thinking ahead only to the next cigarette.

Other prisoners, lacking Ben's silent, ferocious hatred, never had much to look forward to except eventual release, which was always too far away to help a man through an individual day. They went crazy, they attacked armed guards with their bare hands, and died still owing time. Not Ben.

"Time for a break," the guard said, every hour. No time to stack their shovels, but for five minutes they could lean on them and smoke and talk. Ben never wasted time in gabbling. The others, he saw just talked one another into despair, whittling away at their misery with words. Ben just smoked. When the

* BY JOHN JO CARPENTER



Ben turned coolly. His first shot hit the chestnut mare in the chest. She went up on her hind legs...



Earl Budden

guard called out, "Fall to!" Ben aimed his mind, like a gun, at the single target of the next cigarette.

An hour a day, he had built his six years.

"Riding through?" the clerk asked sociably. "Not much doing this time of year. In the fall, though, there's plenty of work. Takes lots of help for round-up, open country like this."

"Looking for a friend," Ben said, prodding at the top of one of the tobacco sacks. "Heard he bought himself a cow ranch here. Know where I can find Sam Goodsell?"

"That'll take some doing. Sam's been dead a year." The clerk hastily added, "Aw, I'm plumb sorry. Didn't mean to josh," when he saw Ben's bitter disappointment. Ben's hands

shook as he pried apart the loops of string closing the tobacco sack.

"Dead?" he managed to say, turning to look out on the street, to hide his face from them.

The street had been empty when Ben tied there. Now a tall, stoop-shouldered man was leading a showy chestnut mare out of the blacksmith's shop. Newly shod on her front feet, the mare was skittish.

"There's Sam Goodsell's kid," the clerk said. "Heap of a horse, ain't it?"

Ben stared. "Sam's kid? Why, last I seen him down along the river, Sam's kid wasn't no more than knee high," he muttered.

"Well, his stepson. Sam married a widow, Miz Wade. That's her boy, Dave. Sam's own boy's about fourteen, I guess."

"Oh!" Ben watched the tall youth step suddenly into the saddle and turn the mare with a firm hand. The horse bolted out of sight, the kid riding him with a swagger. "Stepson, you say. How old is he? Come into Sam's property, too, I guess."

"Twenty-two. Him and the kid shared it. Good, level head, that boy's got. He's running the Hellhole himself and doing a right smart of a job. Sam set a heap of store by Dave. Didn't leave no trustee over him. Made him guar-deen of his own kid, Lee."

"Oh?" Again Ben turned his face so they wouldn't see the way it changed. He was beginning to feel light-hearted again.

He slouched out and mounted. As he pointed toward Hellhole, the old loafer got up to stare after him.

"I don't like his eyes," he mused. "And he's got a rifle in his saddle boot. And he ain't half tryin' to catch up with Dave. See his face? Mean. Old Sam made a lot of enemies down there while he was county attorney. S'posin' that was some convict, now?"

"No convict ever had a color like that," the clerk said. "Prison bleaches them white."

"Road gangs don't."

The clerk came to the door to watch.

"Wonder if maybe we hadn't ought to slide out and warn Dave?" the clerk said uneasily. "Wouldn't do no harm."

But it was hot, and a long ride out to Hellhole, and the more they thought about it, the more foolish it seemed. A man just didn't ride fifteen, sixteen miles in this heat for nothing.

In thirty minutes they had forgotten, and were asleep again.

CATTLE had been hiding down there in the ravine, and it was a good time to break the chestnut in to her shoes.

"Wouldn't do no good to argue, Lee. You're going to make a hand, so you might as well saddle old Pete and come along," he told his step-brother, Sam's son. "They have their danged calves down there in the spring, when it's green and thick, and they ain't got any better sense than to go back. We'll brand what calves we can catch and roust them all up to the hills."

They found five unbranded calves. On the fifth, Dave got a rope-burn on his wrist. Lee was treating it with creosote "dope" when it happened.

Lee's hat sailed off. Something squealed through the air and went plop in the sand. Lee dropped the dope bottle and pawed at his hair, surprise making his boyish face vacant.

Then came the flat rifle crack, rattling across the ravine. Lee had old Sam Goodsell's hair-trigger nerves.

"Somebody shot at me," he hollered shrilly, diving for the brush.

The rifle cracked again as Dave sprinted for the horses, yelling, "Come on! Don't get caught afoot here, you durned fool!" He had already spied Ben Hathlow up on the bank. He gained the saddle in one long-legged leap and could have spurred out of range, but he held in the rowdy chestnut, shouting for Lee.

All he could see was moving brush



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as the terrified boy plunged in deeper. The rifle followed Lee, rather than Dave, the man on the bank twisting to trace the boy's zig-zag course. The gun cracked again and Dave understood. Old Sam had received plenty of threats in his lifetime. Nothing scared him, until he knew he was leaving Lee half-grown and fatherless.

"Take care of him, Dave," he begged, the last day he could talk.

"I sent some mean men where they belonged, in my day, and there's some might take it out on him. Or on you! Take Monte Chavez, or the Poole boys, or Ben Hathlow." Old Sam's mind was beginning to wander with fever.

* * *

Dave had a .45 on him, with five bullets in it, the hammer down on an empty chamber, for safety's sake. It was a tool, not a weapon; he used it for killing coyotes and other preying varmints, and for putting sick critters out of their misery.

He grabbed at the gun, unthinkingly, and spurred the chestnut at the man up there with the rifle, yelling, "Hit the dirt, Lee—hit the dirt!" There was no brush moving out there now. He couldn't tell whether Lee had already dived for cover or had been hit.

Ben turned coolly. His first shot hit the chestnut mare in the chest, just as she scrambled up the bank. She went up on her hind legs and backwards, her new, shiny shoes twinkling in the sun. Dave kicked free and threw himself, head first, at the ground. He lit on his shoulder and kept rolling, hearing the ugly sound as the mare's spine snapped when she fell on her back.

For a moment, the dead horse was between Dave and Ben, and by the time Ben had moved down the bank, Dave had bored into the brush, his heart pounding. He lay there, panting and quivering, trying to get used to the unbelievable fact of being shot at.

From where he lay he could see his dead mare, the smouldering branding fire, and old Pete, whom they had tied. Pete was spoiled; he hated work, and would sneak home every chance he got.

As Dave watched, Ben shot the old horse. The slug hit him high up in the belly. He sat down ludicrously, like a dog, and looked around as though curious to see what made him hurt so bad. When he tried to move it hurt worse, and he screamed.

LEE GOODSELL, his freckles limned brownly on his white face, came squirming up beside Dave. "You hurt, kid?" Dave panted.

"No. Only where I skinned myself," Lee whispered.

"Got to get out of this," Dave panted. "Show up too plain here."

They crawled on, Lee in the lead, Dave looking back over his shoulder now and then. Apparently Ben had seen the .45, for he came down to the edge of the brush, hesitated and went back. Dave gritted his teeth, praying the man would come in after them. In here, they could lie in wait for him, and a .45 was a better weapon in brush than a long-barrelled .30-30.

They crossed the alkali scum, and Dave caught Lee's ankle, signalling him to stop. He pointed up to where Ben stood.

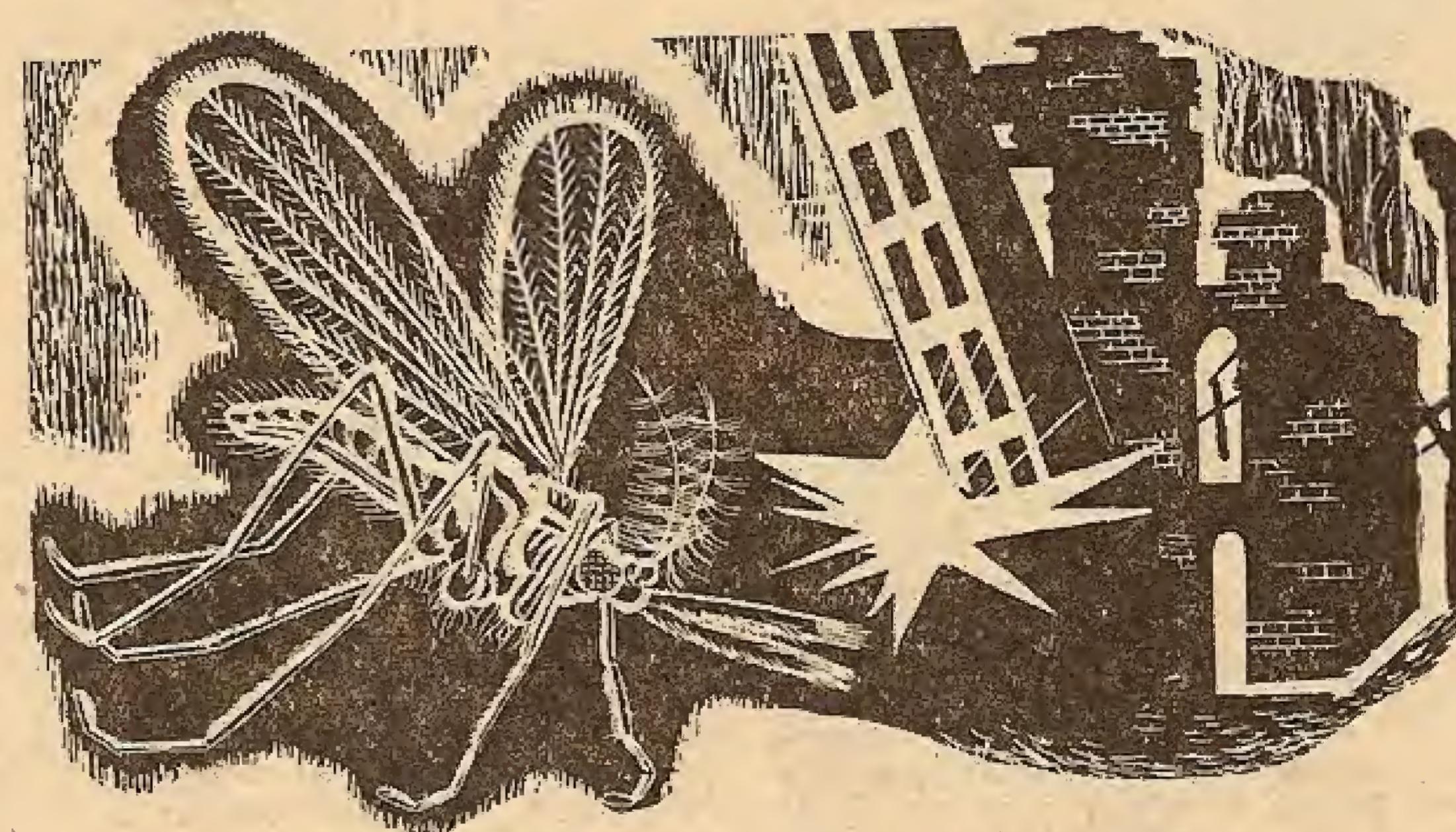
NOW and then, that first afternoon, Ben detected them. They always tried to lie facing him, so they could watch him level the .30-30. They got so they could tell when he saw them, when he merely pretended to, to make them move. Several times his searching shots came close.

Each time they squirmed to new hiding places. It was hard to keep from jumping up and running, but since old Pete's death, Lee's nerve held as well as Dave's. Each time the new cover protected them for a little while—until one of them moved inadvertently, or the relentlessly moving sun changed the lighting, or Ben's patiently searching eyes detected them.

Night came, and their hopes rose, because they were young. There was an hour of half-darkness before the full moon brought almost daylight visibility. While it was darkest, Dave left Lee hidden in the brush, dangerously close to where Ben lurked.

"You count up to five hundred," he whispered, "and then lay on your side and pitch a handful of pebbles yonder. Don't take chances—don't raise your head! I'll crawl down there and come in behind him. And if I ever get a bead on him—"

It almost worked. Either Dave was slower than he expected or Lee counted too fast, for he was still not out of the ravine when Lee threw the pebbles.



When Dynamite Fought Disease

It was a strange war, with men using modern explosives against treacherous insect.

Way back in 1849, an innocent-looking American schooner entered the Brazilian port of Bania. But that small schooner was to cause countless thousands of deaths. On board was a sailor suffering from yellow fever, and a striped mosquito quickly spread the disease among the Brazilians. For 50 years the slaughter continued. In Rio de Janeiro alone, between 1891 and 1894, 15,000 people died from this scourge.

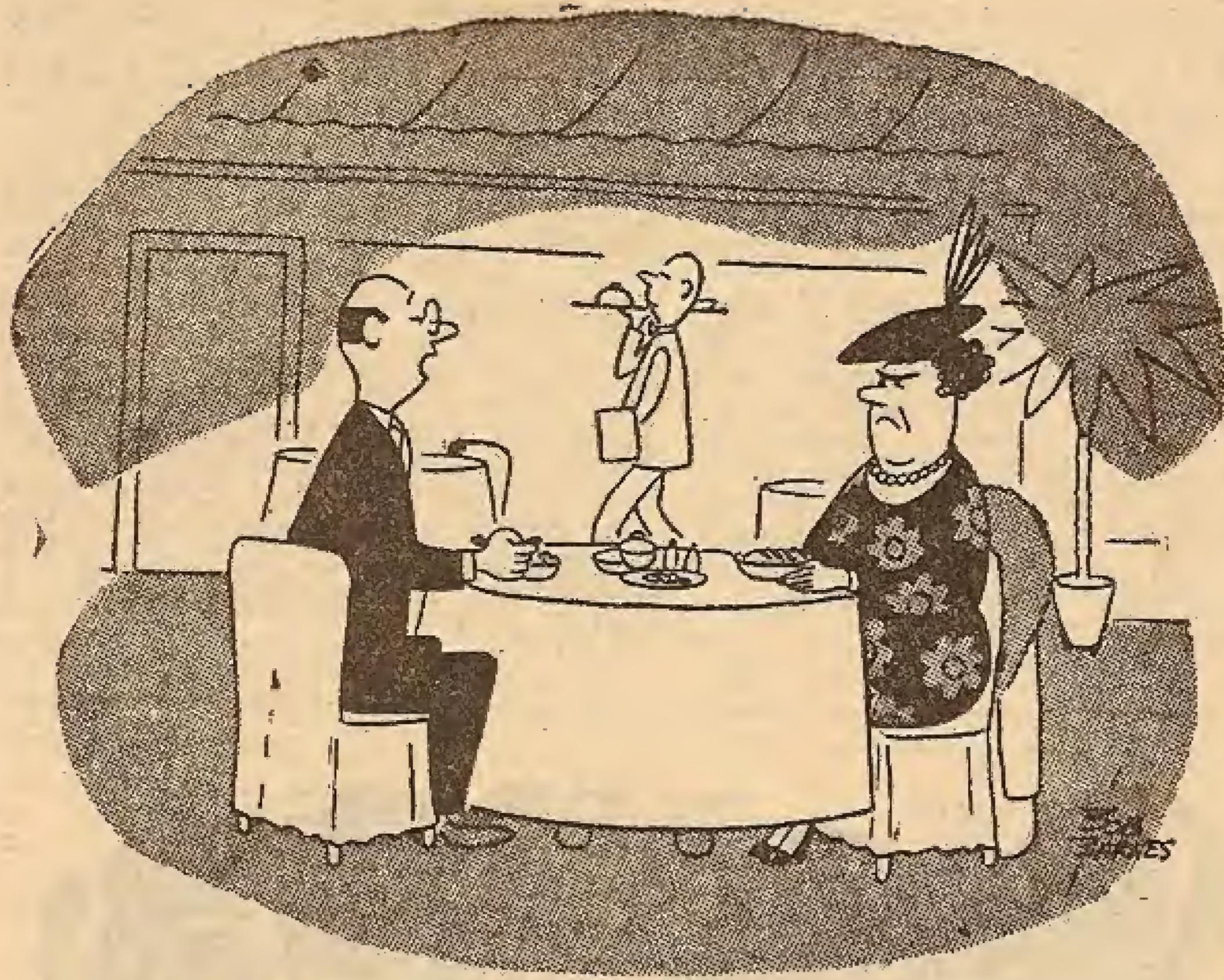
World-wide appeals for help and medical advice failed. Brazil was known as the "land of the living dead," overseas steamship lines advertised that they avoided its ports. Unless yellow fever could be stamped out, Brazil faced financial and physical destruction.

The answer came from young Dr. Oswaldo Cruz . . . a Brazilian who had already made a name for himself by stamping out an epidemic of bubonic plague. The young doctor, however, faced fighting years, for although his methods were commonly accepted, he faced great opposition from conservative medical circles. Horrified that ridding Brazil of epidemics should be entrusted to "a young upstart," these groups commenced a campaign which was to turn the population of Rio against Cruz and the Government which supported him.

With Rio up in arms against him, Cruz appealed for 1200 members to stamp out the disease-carrying mosquito in its breeding place; 235 people co-operated in forming the famous mosquito brigade, which dressed in khaki uniforms and armed with brooms, kerosene and spray guns, set about to rid the country of Yellow Fever.

During the next three years, the brigade paid 512,000 visits to Rio's 65,000 houses. A million and a half reservoirs, tanks, gutters and stagnant water receptacles were cleaned and kept clean. Some 3000 buildings were ordered evacuated. Whole city blocks were dynamited. By February, 1907, there was no more yellow fever in Rio. The young doctor and his small mosquito brigade had rid the country of the disease.

The individual determination of a young doctor, combined with the co-operation of others, saved Brazil. Here, in Australia today, co-operation is saving the financial security of countless Australian families. Through their free and independent Life Assurance Offices, three million Australians provide for the future security of themselves and their families . . . and at the same time their savings are being used for the benefit of the nation. Every Australian benefits through Life Assurance. Advertisement



"Oh, go ahead and eat it . . . it wouldn't dare disagree with you."

Dave saw Ben stand up. For a moment he was sharply outlined against the night sky, just out of .45 range. Dave lunged to his feet and ran toward him. Ben heard the crackling of the brush but he remained standing, peering down into the ravine. A cigarette glowed, darkened, glowed again rhythmically, in the corner of his mouth.

Dave was within a dozen yards when he tripped. Ben whirled and slanted the rifle down. It barked twice, and Dave heard the slugs snarl into the sand less than a yard away. He rolled for cover, lost his head, and pumped three wild shots back in return.

Afterward, as he lay panting, almost crying, in the brush, he cursed himself. If he had only taken his time! If he had only knelt there, after he tripped, and taken his chances! He could see Ben better than Ben could see him, and it wasn't the longest shot in the world for a .45.

But he had blundered, and there was only one shot left in the .45. He crawled back toward Lee, who could see Ben prowling uneasily up and down the bank, and who did not need to ask questions.

The exercise, the excitement, had made Dave's dry mouth ache with pain. Tomorrow, he realised, they would feel worse than this just lying still. If only they had water, they might have a chance to outlast him. Water was their weakness, Ben's strength. Dave's mother would not be alarmed at one night's absence; the Hellhole was a big range and a man just couldn't ride in for supper every night.

But if they went a second night, he knew she would take alarm. All that would be required would be for someone to ride out far enough to spot those hungry, wheeling buzzards.

But without water, with a single bullet left, there was no use fooling themselves. Lying there in the

dark, Dave cursed himself for squandering their luck.

"If he'd only come in here after us!" he kept saying.

Hathlow didn't come. He knew better than to walk into the brush, with a long-barrelled rifle, against a man with a six-gun. What was another day or two of waiting, after six years? Hathlow could stand it, and they couldn't.

That was last night.

BEN thought he knew every square foot of that ravine by the time the buzzard's shadow alerted him the second day. The years on the road gang—silent, ingrown ones—had given him peculiar powers of concentration, of remembrance. He could turn his back and still see, clearly and in detail, the brush-covered floor of the ravine.

They were pretty smart, those two, but they couldn't last much longer without water. It was getting hotter, drier. Little dust-devils blew up and down the ravine every few minutes. The sluggish currents were capricious. Dave Wade was taking every advantage of them. He waited until the air was full of fine dust, in the wake of these little whirlwinds, before he moved.

Again Ben rolled a cigarette, grumbling silently because papers and tobacco were both damp with sweat. He stuck the cigarette in his mouth and reached up to the band of the straw sombrero for a match.

"Damn!"

It was the first word he had spoken in a whole day. The damp head of the match came off, leaving a blue streak on the rock. He took his hat off and looked at it, marvelling. It must be hotter than ever today; he had sweat clear through the straw.

He laid tobacco, matches and paper out on the hot boulder. It wouldn't take long for them to dry. While waiting, he stood up and took a long pull from the big canteen. He had three more like it, big two-gallon ones, back where he had tied his

horse, a quarter of a mile away. For food, he had a quarter's worth of raisins. Many a time he had gone longer, worked harder, on less.

He stood there, sucking the unlighted cigarette, studying the ravine uneasily. The sweat puddled out of his armpits and ran down his lean, work-toughened side muscles. He twitched the sticky shirt away from his body angrily. When he couldn't smoke he got fidgety, and when he got fidgety it seemed like the sweat just poured out of him.

It suddenly occurred to him that he had not seen anything of them since shortly after sunrise, when he had surprised the older one and driven him to cover as he probed the far edge of the patch, surveying it as a possible get-away. Ben knew they never would try that. Once out on the barren alkali plain, they were his meat.

Maybe they were already dead! A savage animal excitement shook his whole body. He took a step toward the bank, as though to descend and find out, and his instinct rebelled. He stopped and threw away the unlit cigarette, which had caught a rivulet of sweat from his nose. Absently, he reached for paper and tobacco and rolled another, but the matches were still not dry.

The lower end of the ravine tapered out widely into small, alkali-filled wrinkles in the hard-packed clay. The upper end to a knifelike point. Walking swiftly, with the rifle cradled under his arm, Ben started around to the other side. If he couldn't see them from one side, maybe he could from the other.

He was halfway around when he reached up absently for a match. Then he remembered he had left them back on the rock. He hesitated, then resumed his walk to the other side. It was lower here, but it gave him a new perspective.

Sure enough, there they were, apparently both asleep, as close as they could get to the other side. He lifted the rifle. It was a long shot, but it would at least show whether or not they still lived.

He fired, and just then a dust-devil came whirling down the ravine, laying a veil of fine, thin, acrid dust behind it. He grounded the rifle butt, waiting patiently. When the dust had settled, the two were no longer there.

HE was sure he had missed, but at least he had learned something. By merely walking around now and then, out of range of the .45, he could multiply their misery. For when he moved, they had to move with him.

He started back. He had reached the top of the ravine when he saw Dave Wade stand up and break out of the brush, running for the bank and Ben's canteen. He staggered, but those long legs still covered a lot of ground.

It was not a long shot for the .30-30 but Ben missed two quick ones because surprised numbed him, and because he was fidgety from need of a smoke. For six years he hadn't gone this long without one. For six years, tobacco had kept his hatred alive and therefore kept him alive. Even during the night they had allowed him to sit up and smoke. The guard called out softly, each time,

"That you, Ben? Bueno." They joked that they could set their watches by him. They allowed him little things like that because he had become a "good" prisoner.

The gullied bank was rough enough to hide Dave as he crawled toward the top, but the canteen was in plain sight. Since he couldn't hit Dave, Ben knelt to fire at the canteen. Then another dust-devil came spinning between them, and he lost his temper and fired through it blindly—again and again and again, until the gun was empty.

He regretted it immediately. He reloaded as fast as he could, but he still wasn't ready to fire when he saw Dave jump over the bank with complete disregard for comfort and safety. The big canteen hung over one arm.

Miraculously, he lit on his feet, staggered and kept going. He hit the brush and threw himself into it like a diver. Ben mopped his face.

Lost my head, he told himself. I get fidgety when I miss a smoke.

He returned quickly to the boulder. He had chewed the cigarette until nothing was left but bitter fragments. He spat them out, rolled a new one and absently lighted it as he scanned the brush patch again. The burning sun had dried the tobacco out quickly. It burned fiercely, and the hot smoke made him feel stronger.

That little dab of water wouldn't help them much. They had gained not more than an hour or two of miserable life. He still had enough water to share with his horse, according to plan, and get away to the north.

DAVE had trouble getting Lee awake when he got back with the canteen. The boy's face was almost black with sunburn. His swollen lips were cracked.

The first cautious drops between his split lips seemed to loose a wildcat in him. He lunged at Dave, and Ben saw the brush move and sent in a shot that came close. Dave kicked Lee back with his booted feet, and the boy lay there motionless, with just his eyes alive.

"Come on. He's got us spotted," Dave snarled, tugging at the boy. Another shot slanted in, but Lee didn't move. Dave sloshed the canteen. "Come on, kid, and I'll give you a drink."

"A drink?" Lee saw the canteen for the first time, and understood why the throbbing in his mouth was not so painful. He inched along after Dave, and Ben continued to pepper the brush back of them.

He saw tears in Dave's eyes as Dave held the canteen for him. For a great distance he heard Dave telling him how to swallow. The canteen was taken away, and Lee closed his eyes.

"How long before it's dark again?" he begged.

"A long time," Dave answered, and Lee's heart fell.

Then he heard Dave chuckle. The drink had cleared Lee's own head a little. He looked up. Dave sounded crazy.

"A long time," Dave repeated, with that same crazy laugh. "Long enough for him to go plumb loco. I grabbed

the son-of-a-gun's matches. Maybe I missed a few, but I got most of them, see?"

He held out the matches.

"I watched him for a long time. He's one of them that's got to have a smoke every hour or he can't stand it. When he can't have no more, he'll come in here after us, because he won't have no better sense," Dave said.

"And when he does, I got one shot left. And this time, I won't make no more fool mistakes."

Dave rolled over, handing the canteen to Lee.

"Finish it. Ain't enough there to hurt you."

It seemed perfectly sensible to Ben when, a few hours later, he went in after them. It was almost dark and he didn't want to spend another night out here, especially without a smoke.

Every time he remembered reaching down, without looking to scratch that last match, he shook with rage. If only he had realised the rest of them were gone, he could have kin-

dled a fire with that last one. He wouldn't have made a mistake like that, except for being so nervous.

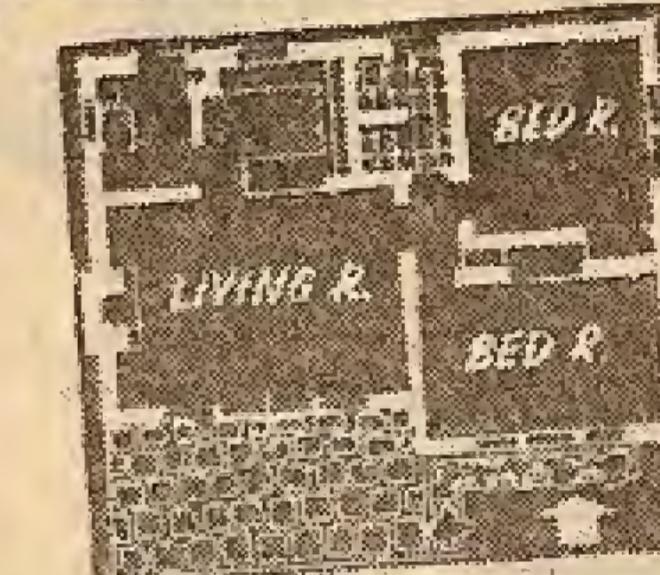
He didn't realise he was nervous now, and making another mistake. The image of Sam Goodsell had faded slightly from his mind. The man he really hated had his matches. He went into the brush after him, the slanting sun at his back, the rifle gripped short. He stalked in a foot at a time, like the preying animal he was.

Dave let him get within a dozen feet before he rose with the .45 steady on his left forearm. Ben swung the rifle around, smashing brush aside with the barrel. He saw Lee, Sam Goodsell's spittin' image, stand up and run out of the line of fire. More important, he saw the little pile of matches at Dave's feet.

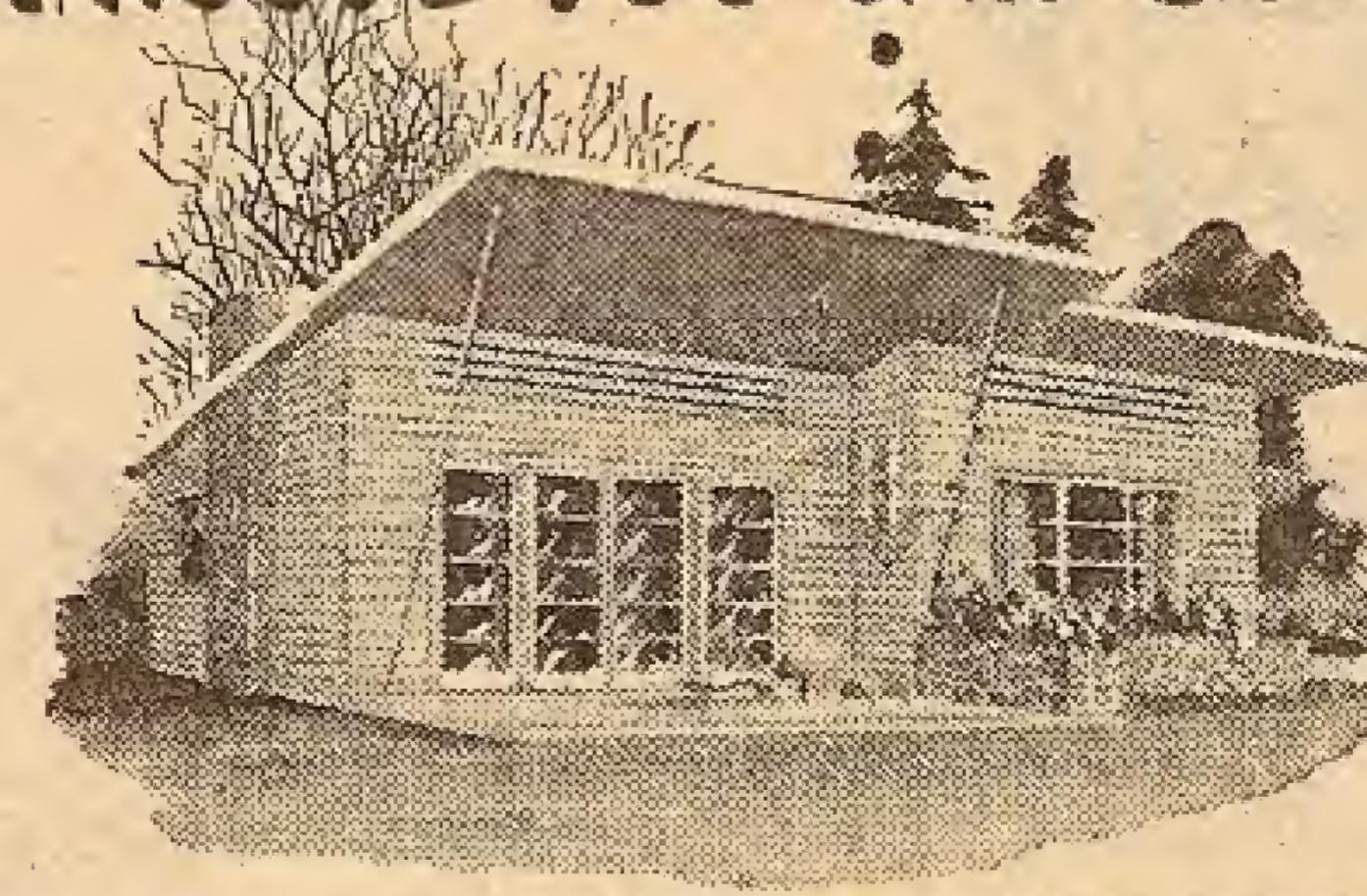
Dave fired, threw the .45 away, and raced toward the bank and the other canteen, Lee hard at his heels. Overhead, the boldest and wisest of the three buzzards began spiralling down. This time, as his shadow passed over Ben Hathlow, Ben didn't move.

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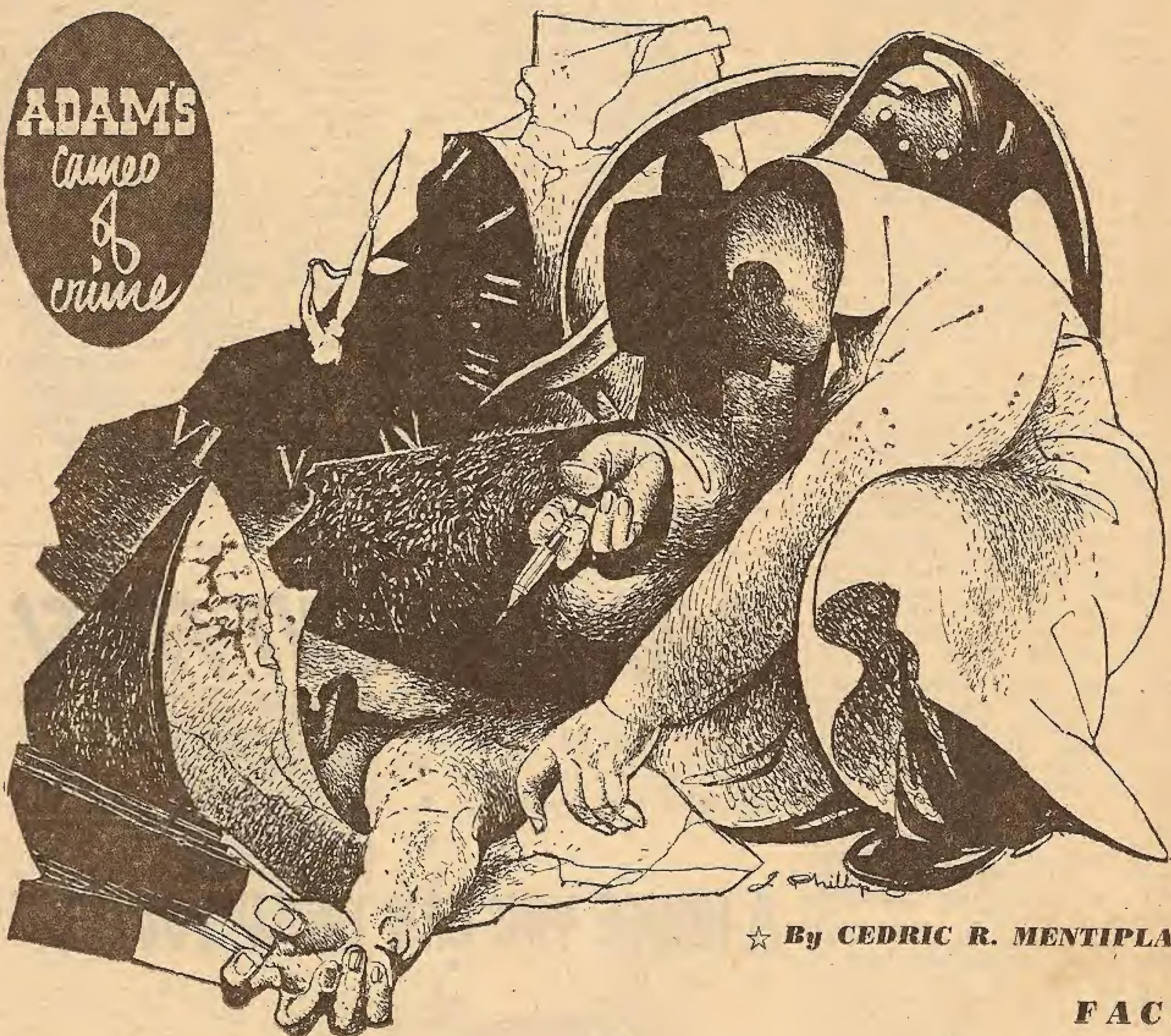
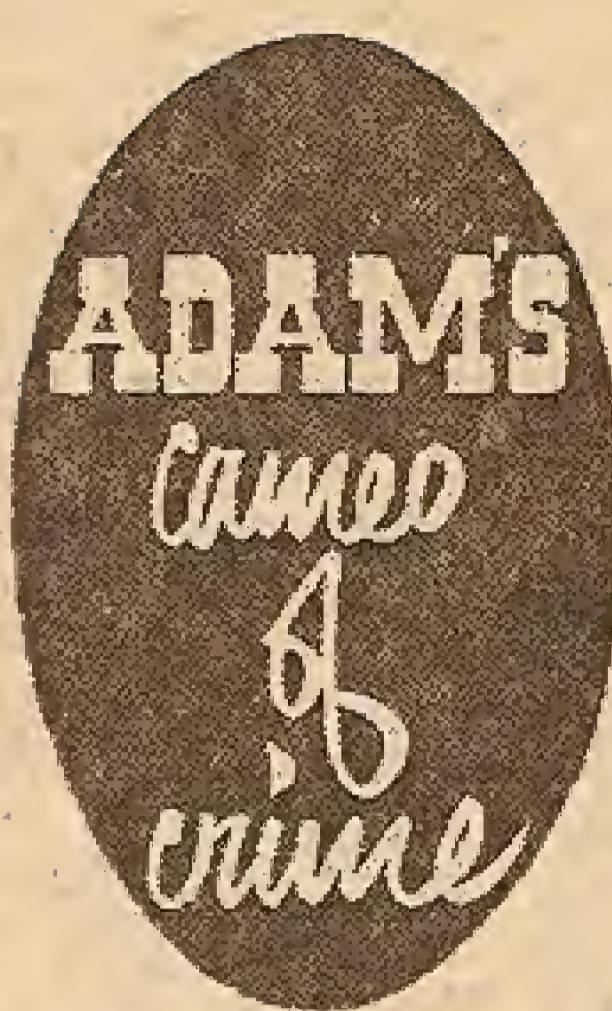
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★ By CEDRIC R. MENTIPLAY

FACT

CAN MURDER EVER BE JUSTIFIED?

*Is there any fact strong enough to make a man kill
in the certainty that he is doing the right thing?*

MURDER is murder—the pre-meditated killing of a fellow human being. The law says that, once proven, it can never be justified. A verdict of murder brings an automatic sentence of death or of life imprisonment. This king of all crimes is not condoned by any code of life observed by civilised man. All churches set their faces against it.

But what about manslaughter, you say? Or what is known as justifiable homicide? Isn't it true that men who have killed have walked freely from the courts which have

convicted them of either one of these crimes? Of course it is—but there is a very big difference between manslaughter and justifiable homicide on the one hand, and murder on the other.

The premeditation angle separates the murderer from the manslaughterer. In the case of the justifiable homicide, the man striking the fatal blow or firing the fatal shot might be doing so in defence of his own life, of his or his employer's property, or even of the code of laws of the community. Men involved in killings such as this have earned

the commendation of the court—but no court in any civilised country has ever condoned what it believes to be murder.

Here is the big question. Can murder itself ever be justified? Where a killing has occurred, and the fact of premeditation has been established, can the man responsible ever be deemed to have acted wisely and without fault? Can one man, even in dire emergency, assume the wig and gown of a judge and decide that another must die?

BEFORE we answer that one, let us consider a few case histories. In each of these the facts are as stated, but in some of them the true names and circumstances have had to be disguised—for these are cases which have never come to court.

The first concerns George Lumley, a major in the United States Army Air Force. George was a level-headed, deep-thinking fellow, not at all affected by the strain of his job or the fact that the squadron had been suffering fairly heavy losses at the time the incident occurred.

It would be easy to dramatise what he did—many fellow-Americans, taking sides over the issue, fell into that trap. But I knew George, both before and after the incident, and I believe that dramatics were quite foreign to his nature. At the time of his greatest trial, he was the sanest, soberest man on Foggia airstrip. He had to be, for he chose to assume a terrible burden.

Foggia, on the Adriatic coast of Italy, was considered by some experts to be sufficient reason in itself to justify the Italian campaign. In that autumn of 1943 it was one of the biggest bomber dromes of the whole massive Allied attack. George, who had a ground job, had seen a lot of Fortresses and Liberators lumber off with heavy loads consigned to Austria, Southern Germany, and Northern Italy.

He had seen a lot come back, too—some with ribbons of blood seeping from their fuselages, others with shattered landing gear, and control surfaces testifying to the accuracy of enemy fire. George had done a lot of thinking about what he would do in certain circumstances; cold-blooded, clinical thinking designed to produce the quickest reaction in a time of emergency. As it happened, this was to be taken by an American court as premeditation of murder.

One day he was out watching the bombers returning from a routine show over Austria. One Liberator came in groggily, the port aileron shot away, one wheel hanging askew. The tower contacted the pilot, but could not get much sense out of him. He was badly hurt, and so were some of his crewmen. Stolidly he refused orders to grab altitude and bail out. He couldn't be sure all his crew would follow him, he said. He was going to put her down on the drome.

The crash-waggon and ambulance revved up and moved out. The siren shrilled a warning. Every man on the field was watching the big silver plane reeling down the sky. George and others were figuring the chances, watching how the Liberator came in over the edge of the strip, gauging where it would make contact. Then they scattered, some on foot, some in jeeps and trucks, racing for the point of impact.

The bomber flopped down on her belly at a hundred miles an hour and ripped up the airstrip, disintegrating as she went. As the flaming mass of wreckage ground to a halt, a man fell out, then two more. The rescue squad grabbed another couple before, with a hissing explosion, the petrol tanks began to go. The heat seared the ground over a radius of

fifty yards or more. The rescuers, unprotected by asbestos clothing, were driven back.

And then from the wreckage came a high screaming. It went on and on, so that war-toughened Air Force men covered their ears and cursed. They could see the man now—a young, fair-haired lad they all knew. He was shockingly injured, and imprisoned between twisted girders in the after part of the fuselage. A mass of debris shielded him from the full heat of the blaze, withholding even that last mercy. He was locked

Speak up, surfers...

*what's the record
high-dive?*

DON'T believe us if you don't want to... but, according to the book, the highest dive on record was made in 1918 from a cliff near Melbourne (Australia) by Alexander Wickham, a native of the Solomon Islands and a champion swimmer. It appears that Wickham bet a bunch of bookies that he could jump from this cliff (which he had not seen). He did not know that the cliff was 206 feet above the water. The bookies offered 50 to one that Wickham would not dare to dive; and 10 to one that he would not survive if he did. When he saw the spot, Wickham at first refused to jump; but finally made the leap rather than wince. He lived; but he was unconscious for days and his body was black and blue for months.

in a giant griddle, doomed to be roasted slowly, inevitably, to death.

As the would-be rescuers fell back with blistered faces and smoking uniforms George Lumley walked swiftly past them. He didn't seem to care about the flames. His face was a hard mask, without emotion. In his right hand was his issue Colt .45 automatic. The screaming went on, a wavering, wordless appeal.

His own uniform smouldering, George paused deliberately. He fired once, then again. The screaming stopped on a high note and men suddenly thanked God for it. The flames roared on. As George came walking back out of the blasted area men could see that his uniform was blackened and dropping to rags and that big white blisters were beginning to puff out on his exposed skin.

A staff-car pulled up. In it was some very high brass indeed. One fellow, with a fine showing of gold on his shoulders, leaned out and shouted, "God, man! How could you do a thing like that?"

George was re-holstering his .45. He looked as if he had aged ten years. "I'd have done that for a dog," he said.

And that should have been the end of it. I know that such things happened both before and after this particular incident. Usually they did not go any farther than the drome. Many aircrew members shook George's hand and swore they'd have done the same themselves, if they'd been quick enough. But the high brass decreed otherwise. George stood trial—for murder!

His evidence was simple enough. He even stated that he had walked in closer, suffering extensive burns, "because I wasn't a good shot with a .45 and I had to make sure." They proved premeditation, and George went back from a military to a civil court, farther than ever from the men who had most cause to admire his courage and humanity. Finally a presidential order came to his rescue and the case was dropped—but not before George Lumley's name and deed were known throughout his native country.

The reaction seemed strange to the men on the field. People at home in snugly air-conditioned lounges argued on the merits and demerits of the case. What if the wind had changed or if the fire had died out before the injured man had been killed? Was George Lumley justified in assuming that the man was doomed? Would it not have been more humane to stand by and let the victim die slowly, on the general theory that "while there's life there's hope"?

What do you think? And, remember, if you find for George Lumley you are condoning murder!

HERE is another case in which your verdict may very well be the other way. I shall not identify the unit concerned or the particular battle in which the incident took place beyond saying that it was one of the earliest brushes between the pre-Montgomery Eighth Army and Rommel's Afrika Korps.

At a critical moment in the battle the man we shall call John Davidson and his driver, Bluey Wilson, lay in a hastily-excavated slit-trench while Jerry artillery and tank guns plastered the area. As commander of the unit, which was not an infantry one, John Davidson had a clear picture of the situation. It is doubtful whether any of his men knew exactly what was going on, except that they were getting a thorough "doing over" and that some of their vehicles were burning.

It was one of those scrambled, opportunist, mobile column actions that the desert warfare alone produced—more like the manoeuvring of hostile fleets than of land armies. Without quite knowing it the Germans had taken an important ridge from which, as soon as they realised its value, they could dominate and outflank the Eighth Army position. If that happened, either the ridge would have to be retaken by frontal attack in daylight or the whole wing of the army would be overrun by the tanks of Rommel's 15th Panzer Division.

John was a man of tremendous personal courage—the sort of fellow who literally does not know what fear means. That type of officer is apt to have little sympathy for the failings of others. Coolly he stood in his slit-trench and appraised the

position through his binoculars. The ridge seemed to be lightly held. There was an opportunity to retake it at little cost—if a force could get forward quickly enough through that barrage. His station-wagon was nearby, hull-down in a wadi, with the trucks of the unit.

"Bluey!" he called. "Get cracking! We're going forward! You other men follow me in your trucks. We're going to occupy that ridge!"

He ran back toward his station-wagon, chancing the shell-bursts. Most of his men were old soldiers, trained to obey. They checked their weapons, stood to their trucks, and wondered. Others lay in their slit-trenches, not quite game to get up. There was a muttering. It wasn't their job. They weren't infantry. They were in enough strife as it was. It was time they cleared out—to the rear, not forwards.

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John couldn't find Bluey. He ran back to the slit-trench. Bluey was there, his face ashen, his hands quivering uncontrollably. He'd just some close shaves recently—who hadn't? He just couldn't get up.

"On your feet!" yelled John. "That's an order!"

"Hell with your order!" Bluey chattered. "I'm staying here. Honest, skipper, I couldn't—"

"Up! It's your last chance! You're driving me in!"

John hesitated. He had his Smith and Wesson .38 revolver out. He could see that Bluey was at breaking-point, that he was ready to start running madly to the rear. If he did so, who would follow? For a moment, as he stooped, John was cut off from the view of the others. The crack of the enemy 88's and 105's drowned all other sounds—

Then John ran back to the station-wagon. He was alone. He revved up, hauled her out into the open. "Mount up!" he yelled, and waved the revolver in an oddly-theatrical cowboy fashion which was just right for the occasion. Then the car was slamming through the sand and shell-bursts toward the ridge—with every truck that could move following.

The crazy charge was successful. The panzer grenadiers watched goggle-eyed as the laboring four-by-four trucks shook out into extended formation, crashed through the shell-fire, and mounted the shallow ridge to get right in among them. They were still marvelling when a charging screen of cooks, gunners, drivers and signalmen swept the ridge clean, got set, and belted back the belated panzer reinforcements.

That was all—except that a unit salvage party, covering the ground after battle, found Bluey Wilson. He still lay in his slit-trench, but he wasn't frightened any more. Between his eyes was a round blue hole made by a .38 calibre bullet—and the edges of the hole bore powder marks.

Of course, there was no inquiry. At the time, there was a great deal of talk about a certain officer intercepting a stray bullet—but any old soldier will tell you that such threats seldom amount to anything. John Davidson saw the war out, and went home with a very senior rank. His decorations included one which was awarded for that same desert show on the ridge. If his conscience ever bothers him, it leaves no outward signs of its nagging.

To himself he probably justifies his action by saying that this one death helped to save the lives of many men, that it might have saved the Eighth Army itself. The tension of the moment was such that, if Bluey had run to the rear, a score or even a hundred others might have followed him. If he had been heard defying his commander and receiving no punishment a general mutiny may have broken out.

But did John have to shoot him? Couldn't he have gone away and left the coward to his own devices? Did the shot have any effect on the success or failure of the charge? It is significant that none of the men

who know the facts condones his action. Some of them pass it off as an error of judgment. The others describe it as "just plain murder."

THERE are many more war instances on the record, but the emergencies of peace are almost as frequent. Every now and then men find themselves in a position where they are arbiters of life and death. It happens in maternity hospitals, where doctors suddenly find they must decide which shall live, the mother or the baby. Air, railway and road accidents, and great natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, provide their quota of emergencies.

I was discussing this recently with a New Zealand doctor. Quite suddenly I found myself in the presence of another George Lumley—a man who had something on his mind, something which took a great deal of carrying. It seems that, as a very young doctor indeed, he had found himself in the middle of the Napier earthquake of twenty years ago.

"I have seen towns which have been bombed and shelled, but never one like that," he told me. "The shake was lateral, and whole fronts of buildings crashed outward into the streets. Fissures opened and shut again, trapping the screaming victims as they ran." When he got there the quakes had been going on for some hours. Fires were roaring away unchecked at a dozen points, and everywhere there was moaning and the uncanny rumbling sound of fresh visitations.

"I found myself dragged off by some wild-eyed citizens to the wreckage of what had been a big building. Now it was a shambles of crumpled masonry and flapping metal, still heaving with the ground. From somewhere in its depths came faint cries.

"Right then and there I had to fight it out with myself whether the risk was worth taking. My mission was to save life, but a dead doctor wasn't much good to anyone. However, the shakes died down and I decided to go in.

"A hole about two feet square let me through into what had been the basement of the building. The floors had let go, dumping the whole interior down into the cellar in a maze of hanging girders and brickwork poised on nothing. I had a torch, but there was nothing much to see. The place was full of fine dust, which still came raining down as the building shifted on what was left of its foundations.

"The cry came again, very feebly. I let myself down into a tunnel in the rubble—and was suddenly knee-deep in water. From nearby I could hear a sound like a river tumbling into a pool. Then I reached out and touched a face. A voice said, 'Easy, Dig. This way.'

"I shone my torch. There were three of them, a man, woman and child. The child was dead. The man, with a foot-square concrete pillar across his stomach, was shockingly injured but conscious and rational. The water was at his throat as he lay face upwards, grinning at me.

The woman was higher, and I could see that her lower left leg had been badly mangled by the steel beam which trapped her. I began to back out. To do any good I needed reinforcements.

"Then the man spoke again. 'There's no time,' he said, almost patiently. 'You hear that water? It's a burst main, and it'll fill this cellar in minutes. Look! You can see the level rising!'

"In the torch-light I could see the black water lapping higher, working up his throat. I stooped, heaved at the pillar. More dust filtered down. The ground rocked again, and the pillar seemed to settle deeper. The man was in terrible agony but was more in control of himself than I was.

"You're a doctor, aren't you?" he gasped. "Cut Ellen out. I'll take my chance. I'll stay with—the boy!"

"Somehow that steadied me. Quickly I did what had to be done. In the few minutes that remained I scarcely noticed the movement of the crumbling wreckage. I completed the amputation with my hands fumbling under the water that cascaded over us both. I got her to the cellar entrance and somebody hauled us both out."

"And the man?" I asked the doctor. "Did he live after they got him out?"

The doctor shrugged. "That's what's bothered me ever since. I gave him morphia—an overdose—before I went to work on the woman. Sometimes drowning isn't a pleasant death. I saved him that. But I wonder—if I'd got help—." He paused, and added almost angrily, "It would have been no use, I tell you! That beam couldn't be moved!"

Murder again, eh? It's quite a familiar pattern—the doctor killing in order to save suffering. In the recent hurricane in Japan doctors gave lethal injections to eighteen people trapped in wreckage. When a crack eastbound express piled up in California last May a doctor who had been a passenger found himself in the same predicament as my friend—except that this time the main enemy was fire. He cut seven people out of the twisted remains of carriages—and killed three more he could not reach in time.

AND then there is the mercy killer of another kind, the non-professional man or woman who sees someone he or she loves doomed to a lifetime of suffering. The records of any major city abound with cases such as this. Reading these cases, one is often struck with the thought that the criminal—for the crime is still murder—is wiser than the code which arraigns him. The code says bluntly, "Thou shalt not kill!" but compassion says that a quick death is the humane verdict. Many doctors, again viewing the problem clinically, believe that a system of mercy killing, or euthanasia, as most people prefer to call it, would be beneficial in civilised communities. They would establish a medical board whose task it would be to determine when a person had passed all hope of recovery, when a continuation of life would bring only needless suffering.

By this system the incurably insane, the people doomed to die of cancerous growths in the vitals,

would be spared months and often years of agony in a quick release. Whenever such a suggestion has been brought forward there have been volunteers for the final treatment—sane, clear-thinking people who believe that in their own cases there is no point in keeping the spark of life flickering.

But how do we, the people, react to such a scheme? With horror and loathing, and a categoric "No!" The churches wouldn't hear of it, for it violates one of the main principles of Christianity as they interpret it. The law courts are dubious, for whose would be the responsibility for a wrong decision? The political theorists turn their thumbs down on it, for it would prove too keen-edged a weapon in the hands of despotism.

Remember Hitler? He and his boys had a theory of euthanasia, based on the superiority of the so-called Aryan race. The idea was hooked in with selective breeding for the production of a super race. All imperfect specimens were to be eliminated. There would be no idiots, no morons capable of perpetuating their own shortcomings. The system got well under way—and it was strange how many of the "imperfect specimens" were to be found in the ranks of the enemies of Nazism. The result was perhaps the greatest mass murder in history.

Then again, on this question of "imperfect specimens" there is a simple challenge. It is that perfection, as we dream of it, is theoretical. Would a race of perfect beings be perfect? It sounds paradoxical, but take an example simpler to follow.

In America some biologists bred some disease-free mice. Every normal animal has diseases latent in its body; men have, too. But these biologists bred mice which from the moment of their birth were fed on sterilised food and made to live in sterilised air inside glass cages of sterilised glass.

Did this complete immunity from germs help the mice? No, it did not. Theoretically they should have been perfect in the biological sense; but they were slow growers, weedy, backward, and when exposed to disease they fell over like a stack of cards. Their biological freedom from disease only made them the easier prey to the first disease that came along.

Now, turning back to humans and their perfection; we have physical specimens who are called "perfect"—but they are rarely the mental giants. We have geniuses whose minds have moulded the world—but they are rarely physically perfect. The fact is that the world has been made by imperfect people; and although it is an imperfect world, every forward step is traceable to somebody who fell short of man's theoretical standards. In other words, men have rolled forward on their weaknesses!

It only takes a moment's thought to realise the truth of this. "With all her faults we love her still" is a very wise and true statement.

But the fanatical perfectionists of Germany believed that they would produce a super-race by eliminating physically imperfect people. They showed the world a cruel tableau of

grisly and disgusting death. But had their principle been practiced throughout the ages the world would have been free of geniuses—and the greatest and most influential characters would never have lived and worked.

So that, whatever the theoretical perfection of man might be, his practical perfection would be more of a loss than a profit in the accounts of history.

So it looks as if we shall have to stick to our code after all. This means that in emergencies we shall have to depend on brave, clear-thinking men like George Lumley and my doctor friend to shoulder the greatest of all burdens. There will continue to be mistakes such as John Davidson made, and conversely a lot of people will be doomed to die lingering and agonising deaths for the want of a merciful needle or bullet. We just don't seem to be wise enough to do otherwise.

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Corrigan earns his pay

KATE COULDN'T LET HERSELF DOWN, EVEN IF
SUPPORTING HER PRIDE COST ALL SHE HAD

CHESTER LINKATER came to Wallis' Plains in the whaleboat from Newcastle. He watched while the convict rowers unloaded his big trunk to the landing stage. He had cause to watch, apart from ten guineas in his pocket and the clothes that he wore, the trunk contained all of his worldly wealth —his wardrobe.

Not that any would suspect that. Lieutenant Peterson, in charge of the local military detachment, did not; he made it his business to familiarise himself with the description of any new arrival at the little village at the headwaters of navigation up the Hunter River from Newcastle.

Nor did Ma Malloy who watched from the door of her shanty as the newcomer stepped fastidiously over the dusty earth from the stage. The sun gleamed brilliantly on his high-topped boots. His tight, white breeches revealed the corded muscles of his long, lean thighs, and a black cutaway coat, floral vest, lace cravat, with silver-mounted cane and tricorn hat, completed the ensemble of the gentleman of the day.

Flattered that such an elegant personage should seek accommodation at her house, Ma bobbed a series of awkward curtsies as she backed into the tap-room. "An' what be yer wishin' sir?" she asked.

Linkater's eyelids shrouded the distaste that his eyes might have revealed. So this fat woman with the coarse, round face was the shanty-

keeper of Wallis' Plains who—rumor in Newcastle had said—was the richest widow in the infant colony of New South Wales. The gilding must be rich and thick if Chester Linkater was to wed and bed with such a one!

But beggars could not be choosers! Linkater smiled amiably. "A comfortable bed, a good table. I am not hard to care for," he said, allowing just a hint of appreciation to his voice. "If everything appeals to me as does your good self, madam, I should do tolerably well in your house."

Experience had taught Kate Malloy the value of flattery. She had worn convict garb during three terms and had learned life in a hard school; yet she found trouble in suppressing a twitch of her lips that would have betrayed a smirk; she pouted to wipe away the impression.

"I don't know as I have a room," she said doubtfully.

Even as she said it, Ma knew that she would find room for him. He filled her eye. He was tall and lean, with high cheekbones, and a hawk nose over thin, straight lips. His chin was pointed and aggressive. His grey eyes, between slitted lids and deeply recessed under shaggy brows, were enigmatical. Ma read in them what she hoped was there.

It was a harsh face, but of the type that some women found attractive for its mastery . . . and even for its cruelty. Ma hazarded a silent guess that she was not the first

woman to feel the fascination of it. He was about thirty-five and Ma was fifteen years older; she told herself that she was a fool; but she decided to give him the best room.

"Step into the parlor, an' I'll see the room is prepared for yer, sir," she said.

"Thank you, and a bottle of your best port while I'm waiting," Linkater replied.

In the parlor, an elderly man seated near the window looked up from the papers he had been reading when Linkater entered. He rose rather stiffly and returned the newcomer's bow and self-introduction. "Timothy Corrigan, at your service," he said.

If standing erect, Corrigan would have measured over six feet in height; but he was stooped at the shoulders. His thin, grey hair and beard suggested an age beyond his seventy years; but his eyes were disconcertingly penetrating. Corrigan spoke and acted like a gentleman; but his clothes were drab and conservative in cut, almost of clerical austerity. He suggested a class that hovered uncertainly between gentry and the lower orders; Linkater hesitated a moment before offering a share in his bottle.

Linkater was disturbed about the man and mentally classified the stranger as a nondescript, retired solicitor. And he was right. Corrigan had been a Dublin lawyer before serving His Majesty in convict garb for a minor part in a conspiracy in the land of his birth—an abortive conspiracy, through betrayal by an informer.

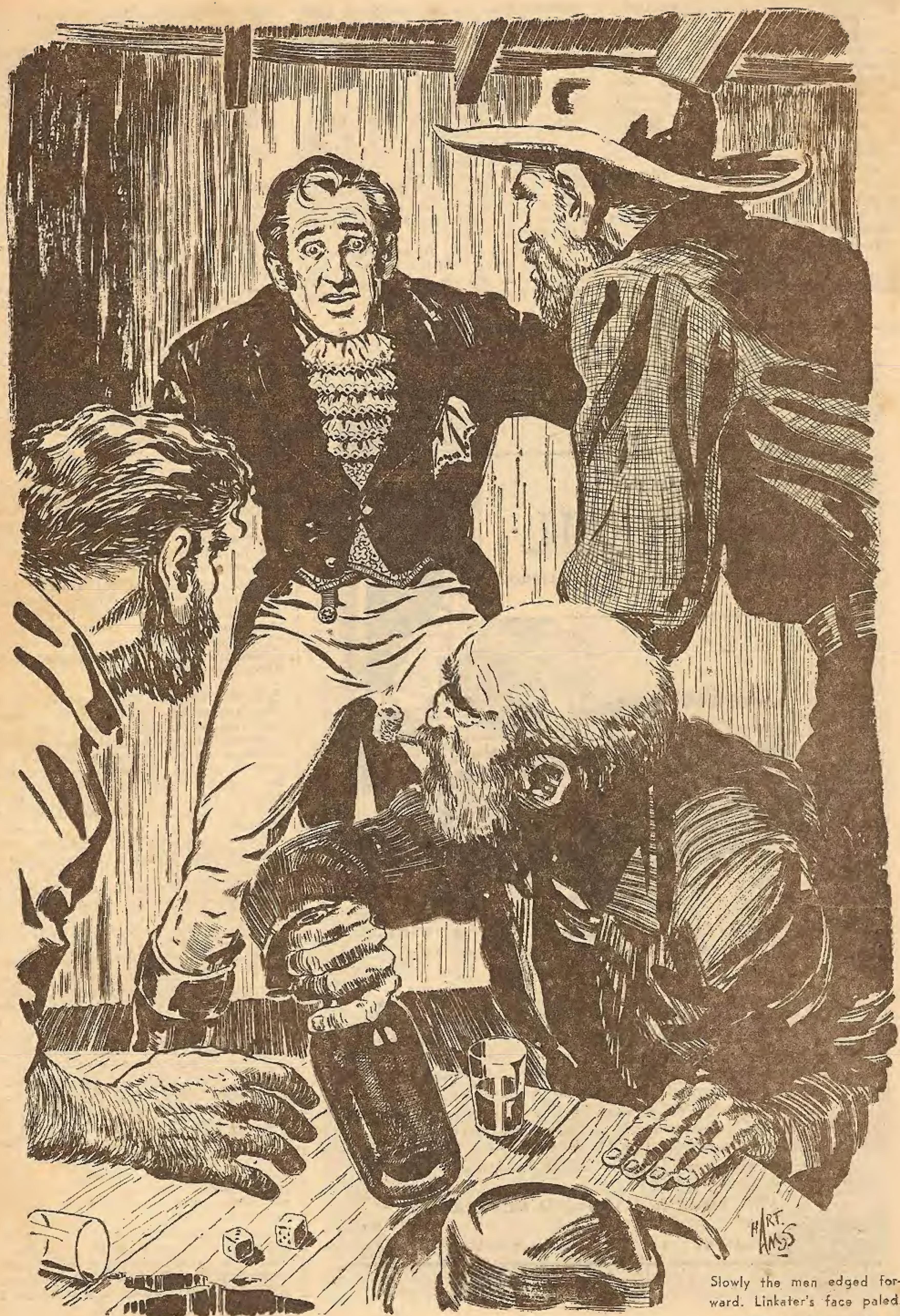
TIM CORRIGAN occupied a unique position in Wallis' Plains. He had neither the strength nor the ability for manual work that would earn him a living and, when he obtained his ticket-of-leave, he could not obtain employment. Ma Malloy, who never failed to give a helping hand to any ex-convict, created work for Corrigan, at the same time abusing herself for what she considered charity.

Kate Malloy's wealth had grown with Wallis' Plains, even in spite of her open-handedness to ex-convicts. She owned most of the land, and by financial backing or outright she had a substantial interest in most of the businesses. She did not know the extent of her wealth and interests until Tim Corrigan put her affairs in order. He had a deep sense of gratitude toward her and admired her. She trusted him.

Linkater took a chance. "I'm thinking of acquiring property

* By MERVYN ANDREWS





Slowly the men edged forward. Linkater's face paled.

ADAM, March, 1952 41

hereabouts," he said tentatively. "Perhaps you could advise."

Corrigan's long fingers stroked his beard meditatively. He had met men like Linkater before and had found little reason to trust them. "A plantation, or a farm perhaps?" he asked.

"No, village property. I believe the worthy Mrs. Malloy owns most of it."

"I believe she has some interests here," Corrigan said warily. "I understand that she is not in the market. I suggest that you inquire elsewhere."

Linkater sensed the other's reluctance to speak freely, and it confirmed his opinion of Corrigan's legal status, sounding a note of

warning that he was quick to heed. He went back to his room as soon as he was told that it was ready, and during the course of the day set out to discover what he could in confirmation of the rumor about Ma Malloy's wealth.

Linkater also went back to the shanty well satisfied with his inquiries; not only did Ma Malloy own most of the village but several nearby farms as well. More than that, he discovered that Corrigan was a ticket-of-leave man; he dismissed Tim as of no account in his scheme for things.

Ma's eyes lifted in surprise when Linkater came into the taproom that night. She sat on an upturned keg at one end of the counter. A few

free settlers mingled with the ex-convicts who crowded into the shanty every night. Most of the men were grouped in front of one or other of the two serving wenches, whom progress of the village had compelled Ma to engage despite her prejudice against girls in her bar. Linkater stepped to the vacant strip of bar in front of Ma and leaned elegantly against the counter.

"The wenches seem popular," he said drily.

Ma rolled her eyes up at his face. His lids were slitted, his nose seemed more hooked, and the nostrils pinched in . . . a bird of prey hovering over two unsuspecting doves. Ma sighed heavily. The girls were young and pretty; she was fifty with a fat, coarse face. She made no comment, but his next words surprised her.

"I can't understand a man making a fool of himself over those shallow, baby faces." He turned his head toward her and his eyes opened slightly; she realised with a shock that there was frank admiration in them. "A buxom woman is my fancy; someone mature and level-headed."

Ma purred inwardly. She knew that she was being a fool, but she could not resist the temptation. She let her eyelids flutter; a slow smile trickled over her fat lips. "Yer'd not be findin' the ladies backward," she said coyly.

Linkater reached out a hand and his long, sensitive fingers brushed a caress along the fleshy forearm of the woman. His voice was low. "I've never met one who really interested me." He paused significantly. "Before."

YEARS of alcoholic amorous had immunised Kate Malloy against taproom flirtations, but she was flattered, though acutely aware that no man in his sober senses would give a second glance at her while two pretty and saucy wenches served liquor, provocative smiles, and coy glances farther along the counter.

"Git along wid yer," she said, but her fat face wreathed in a pleased smile as she added, "An' I'm meanin' it. Me taproom's no place for a gent'man like yerself. Go to the parlor an' I'll be sendin' a wench in wid a bottle of fine old port I bin savin' special."

"Bring it yourself." There was a burr of persuasive earnestness in his voice. "And do me the honor of sharing it with me, Mrs. Malloy."

It had been so long since Kate Malloy had been called anything but "Ma" that her formal title surprised her into gaping open-mouthed. She managed to say dubiously, "I should be lookin' after me taproom."

"The girls can manage for one night," he urged.

Ma hesitated for a moment only. She nodded agreement, her eyes sparkling, and she took not one bottle but two.

She withdrew most reluctantly from the parlor and Linkater's charming company when the quietness that descended on the taproom indicated that all of the customers had left.



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She found the room deserted, save for the girls, who were cleaning up, and for Tim Corrigan settled in his favorite corner, having his nightcap of Irish whisky. Tim's eyes assessed her shrewdly as she entered; his lips pursed as he noted her flushed face and the dancing lights in her eyes.

"You find the gentleman entertaining," Tim said, with a queer twist to his mouth.

His voice jarred on Ma's nerves, pricking the bubble of her elation. She felt that she had made a fool of herself, and that Tim knew it. Resentment flared in her; and, though it was more at herself than at him, she vented it on the old man.

"Be mindin' yer own business . . . an' that'll pay yer more than yer worth for doin'," she said tartly. "I know how to run me own shanty best."

Corrigan looked at her with his eyes expressionless.

"No doubt you do, Ma," he said evenly. "And no doubt you will continue to do so as long as it is yours to run."

Ma bridled. "Why shouldn't it go on bein' mine to run?" she retorted harshly.

"That is for you to say," Corrigan told her enigmatically. "Good night, Ma."

Tim tossed off the remainder of his whisky, rose from the bench and walked from the room without a backward glance. Ma stared after him, her eyes baleful.

Corrigan never was worth his pay, she was reminding herself malevolently; so he had best mind his tongue or he might find himself turned out in the road.

Yet Tim's words and his manner nagged at her. She had not quite understood what he had meant, but she refused to give him the satisfaction of asking for an explanation. She treated the old convict very coolly for several days.

LINKATER sought his room that night thoroughly satisfied with his progress. He could almost persuade himself that the misfortunes which had befallen him in Sydney Town were remarkably good fortune in disguise. At least, they had led him, via Newcastle, to Ma.

Chester Linkater squirmed fastidiously and could not deny that the fat, hard-faced shanty-keeper was a bitter pill to swallow.

Still, once he had married Ma, and her property had become his by law, he need not live with her.

Linkater fancied himself as a man-of-the-world. He had suffered throughout with abominable luck at cards and expensive tastes. On two occasions he had replenished his fortunes by marriage. The second time — quite recently in Sydney Town — he had not waited for his freedom by death or divorce of his English (and legal) wife.

He wondered, a little apprehensively, if those two wives had met in Sydney Town. He had not yet quite recovered from the shock of a chance glimpse of his legal lady landing from a vessel in Sydney Cove. His hurried and secret flight to Newcastle had followed — even though the number and value of the IOU's he had been forced to sign in

recent weeks must have compelled it in the end.

And at Newcastle, he had heard whispers of the wealth of Ma Malloy. The world was wide, and passage on ships easy to obtain when one had control of the fortune of Ma Malloy.

By the end of a fortnight, Kate Malloy was completely under the spell of her gentlemanly charmer. She had had her moments of doubt and anxiety, of course, but he had always soothed away her fears. She had promised to marry him as soon as a minister came to Wallis' Plains. And she was so elated that drinks were on the house for any who came to the shanty that night.

Next morning, with Linkater out, Tim Corrigan asked Ma Malloy to come to the parlor. He had a bundle

of documents and some ledgers on the table.

"There are all your deeds, Ma," he told her in his most business-like tones. "The grants to your land, bills of sale, agreements, and the like. Here are your account books. You will find everything in order up to today."

"What are yer meanin', Tim?" she asked, bewildered. "Me gittin' married agen won't make any difference; I'll still be wantin' yer to tend to my affairs just the same."

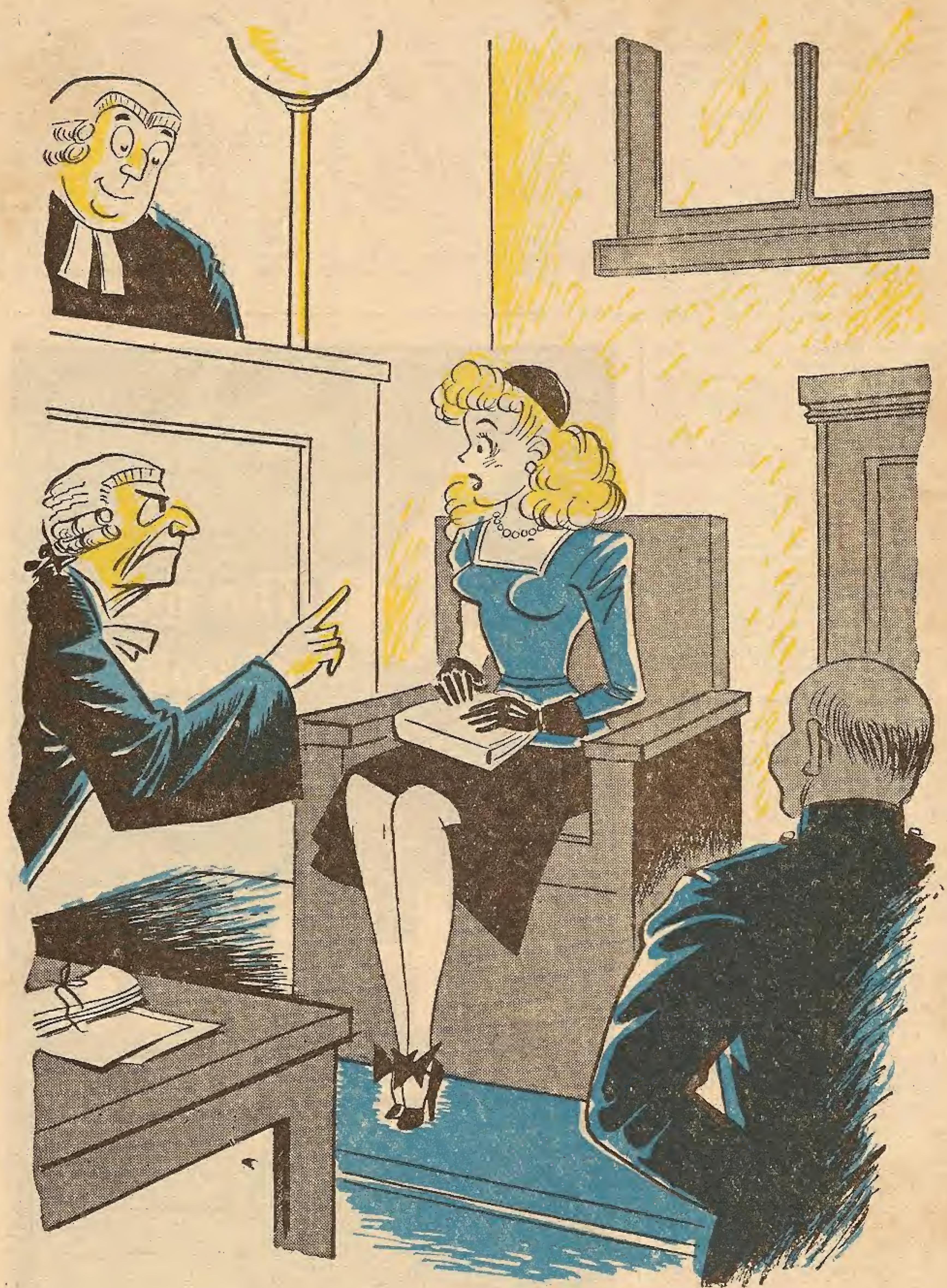
Corrigan coughed diffidently. "I doubt if Mr. Linkater will wish me to tend to his affairs and manage his property," he said with significant emphasis.

The point was not lost completely

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"Oh dear, I was hoping you wouldn't ask me that!"

on Ma Malloy. Her eyes opened wide; her fat lips gaped. In her earlier marriages—legal or bigamous—she had not been concerned with property and property rights. Neither she nor any of her three prior husbands had had property with which to be concerned, but now a haunting fear welled up in her.

"His property!" she said in hushed tones.

"Yes, his," Corrigan said positively. "Immediately you marry him, all your property becomes his by law."

"But—" She stopped short, rather than express it. She felt Corrigan's cold, enigmatic eyes on her and found herself flushing.

Tim smiled thinly. "Unless it is secured to you by a marriage settlement," he told her.

A wheezy sigh of relief gushed from Ma's lips. "Write it out, Tim," she said. "Chester don't want none of my property. He's got plenty of his own; he told me so."

"Then he won't mind signing a settlement," Corrigan said evenly. "Ask him, Ma; then I'll draw up a deed."

Ma asked Linkater that evening. Somehow, Linkater managed to conceal his disgusted surprise.

"Did you think I wouldn't protect you, Kate?" he said. "I'm settling some of mine on you. I've written to my lawyer in Sydney Town to have the deed for us to sign when we go there for a trip after we're married."

Ma beamed, her fears dissipated; but Tim Corrigan was not so easily cosseted.

"Very generous of him, Ma," he said smoothly next morning. "He can't know that it must be signed before marriage. I've prepared one for you; get him to sign it."

Linkater was hurt . . . deeply, grievous hurt, indeed. His expression and voice showed it.

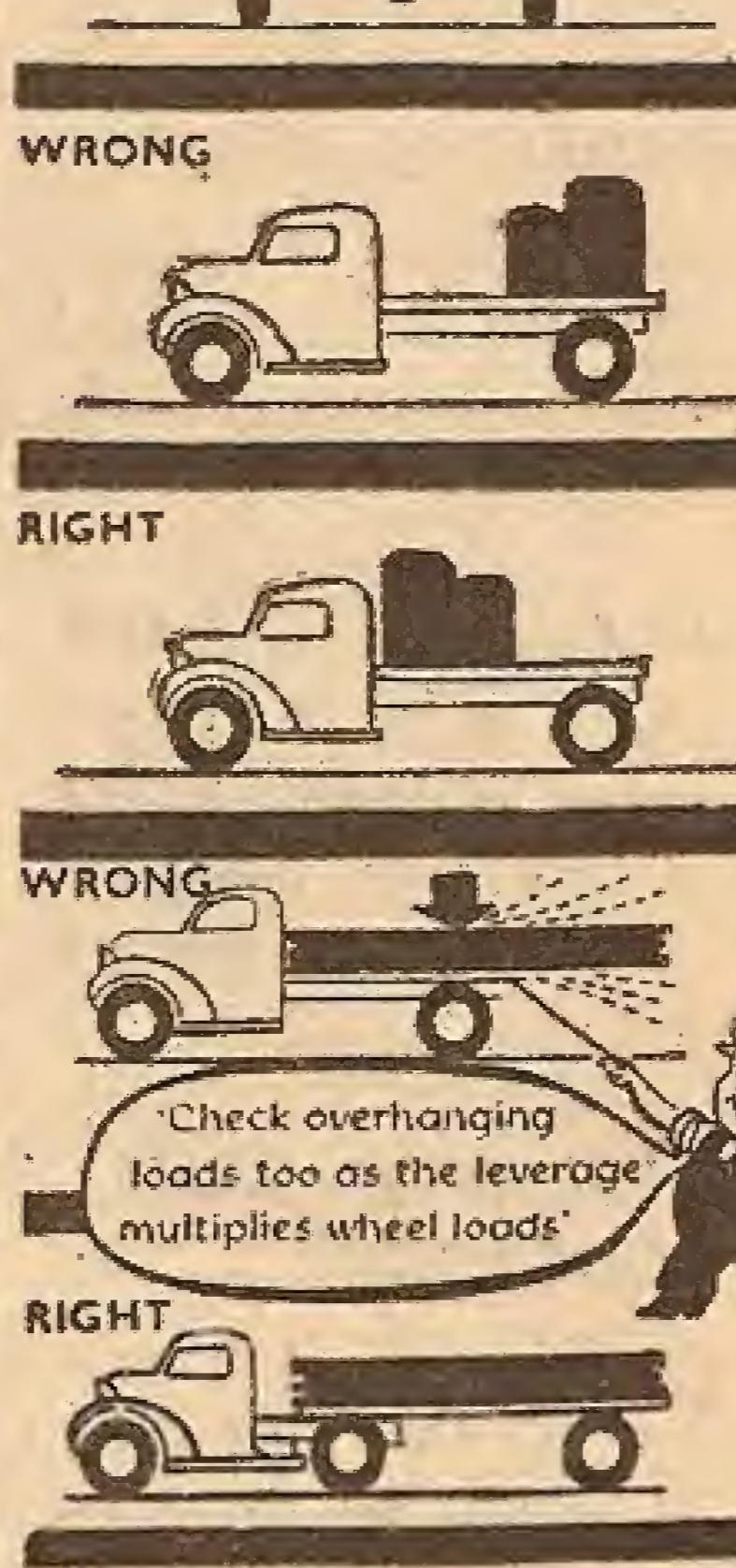
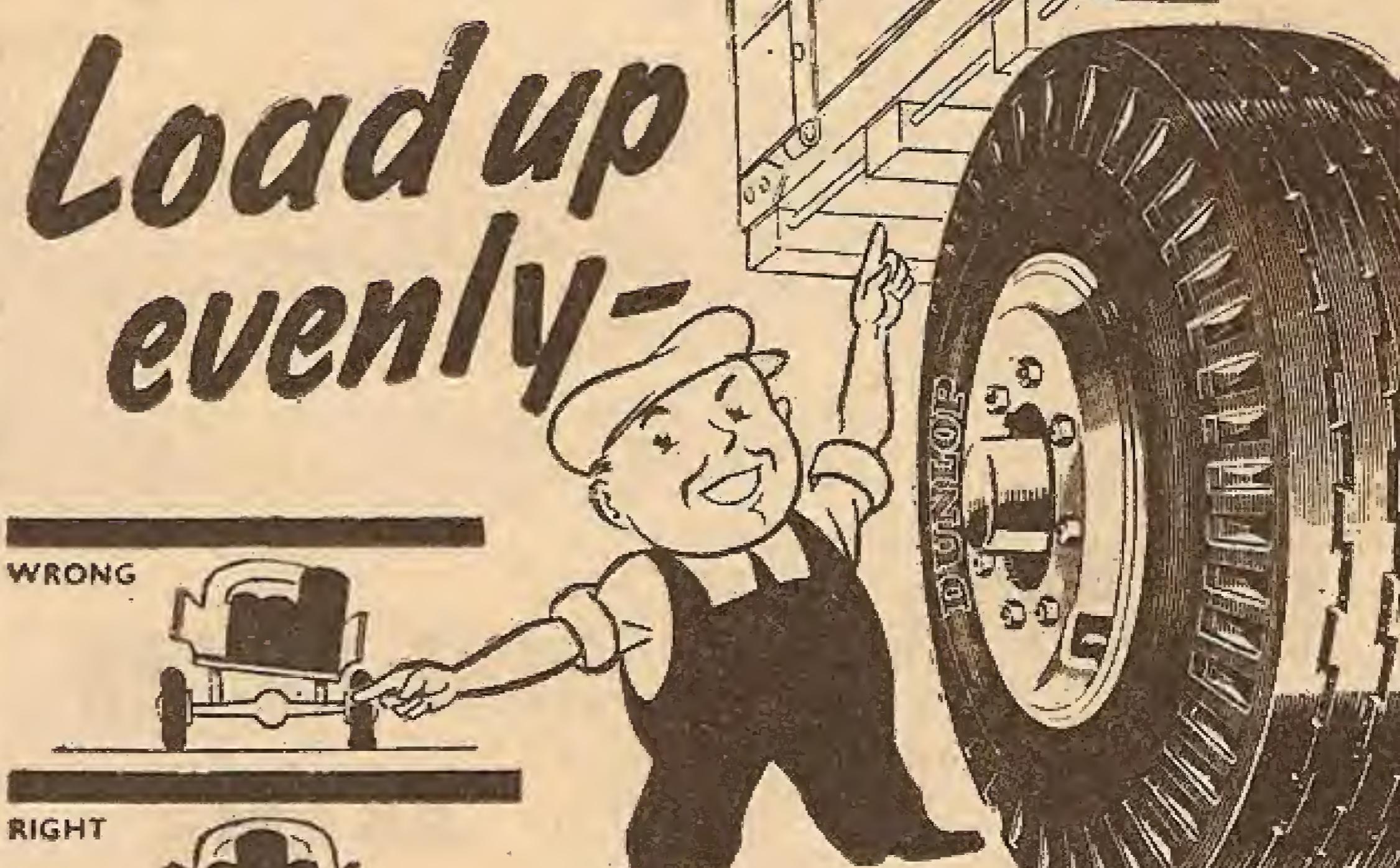
"Where there is no trust and faith, there is no love, Kate," he said wistfully. "If my word is not good enough, perhaps we'd better—"

He left the sentence in air. Ma Malloy's face puckered in a grotesque imitation of a baby close to tears. It hurt her to realise that Linkater was marrying her for her money . . . and for her money only. But Ma had her pride.

"No, Chester, it's not I don't trust yer." Suddenly she ripped the deed into shreds. "That's for Corrigan's deed! I'm takin' yer word. We marry when parson comes on the whaleboat tomorrow."

Linkater smiled thinly. It had been a close thing; Corrigan would get short shrift when the wedding was over.

Tim Corrigan watched Ma Malloy with sympathetic eyes when she told him. "I gotta go through with it," she said half-bitterly; half-forlornly. "If I pull out, all the boys'll say it's because I find out he on'y wants me money. I'll get me a man . . . an'



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ADAM, March, 1952

no one need know the property ain't still mine."

Tim Corrigan read her thoughts and knew what motivated her, and knew that she was throwing away both herself and her property; but he didn't know what he could do.

There were various people about to whom he could talk but they meant nothing, knew nothing, could do nothing; and besides, you couldn't talk to anybody about a woman—except the woman herself, and she wouldn't listen. It was a grievous worry on Tim's shoulders.

"Y'know, Ma," he said, "you don't know much about Mr. Linkater —"

"Pshaw!" Ma's exclamation of disgust did not move Tim Corrigan.

"Well, it only stands to reason," he said.

"Reason! This is my reason!" Ma thumped her chest with her forefinger, over her heart. "Tim, weren't ye ever young? Didn't yer heart ever tell ye what to do? And was it ever wrong?" she asked.

Tim Corrigan could have answered that one, but preferred not to. He, too, had his pride.

"I'm not disputin' with yer heart, Ma," he said. "And I've no doubt that it's telling yer right. But what about Mr. Linkater's heart, Ma? Is that telling him right?"

Ma allowed Tim Corrigan a lot of privilege, but not this much.

"Away with ye, Tim," she ordered. "Mr. Linkater is a gentleman who —"

"Who doesn't know the law, or doesn't care for it," Tim said.

"Ah!" Ma fell back on banter. She looked at Tim steadily and said, "Tim Corrigan, I do believe yer jealous!"

Tim shrugged and turned away. There was a saying that if you convince a woman against her will she's of the same conviction still. You just couldn't teach a woman a thing.

Lieutenant Peterson was strolling past just then, and Tim nodded to him.

"A good day to you, Tim," said the dignitary.

"Ah," Tim said, "It's a good day for Wallis' Plains when a fine rich man like Mr. Linkater comes to join the community. We need his like!"

Peterson agreed, and the two stood and chatted for a minute or two.

When Tim Corrigan left the lieutenant he felt a little glow of satisfaction. He felt that, after all, something might be done. But in

the following days he did not argue as much with Mrs. Malloy.

CORRIGAN shook his head; he knew that the wedding would not save Ma from the smirks and the sneers of her customers . . . just the same as nothing would save her property for her once the marriage was celebrated. No fool like an old fool, he thought. Well, it

was for Tim Corrigan to save this one and earn his pay.

At mid-afternoon, when the whale-boat was approaching the landing stage and the crowd frolicsome with free drinks, Ma Malloy rapped on the counter for attention. She looked at Corrigan. Tim would see it through for her, she hoped.

Tim nodded and walked forward, whisky glass in hand. It was time for a toast . . . and Ma wanted one to Linkater. Linkater's lips twisted as Corrigan raised his glass.

"Boys," Tim said. "It's time we drank a toast to the bridegroom. Ma thinks he's a fine man, and she doesn't know half about him that I do. She doesn't know Chester Linkater was a pimp."

Pimp! That word was fighting-talk to the men of Wallis' Plains. To them the pimp — the informer — was the lowest form of animal-life. Tim drove home his advantage. He stabbed an accusing finger at Linkater.

"There!" he shouted. "A pimp! The man who's lying tongue sent Timothy Corrigan to Botany Bay in irons!"

A pimp! Ma Malloy's eyes spat loathing. A low, vicious snarl rasped from the men crowded in to the tap-room.

Slowly the men edged forward.

Linkater's face paled to a dirty grey; his eyes flicked from side to side. He leaped for the side door as the yelping pack lurched forward. Linkater dashed into the road. Lieutenant Peterson, at the head of a squad of redcoats, halted in front of the shanty.

"Your protection, Lieutenant!" Linkater squealed.

"I'll give that," the soldier retorted grimly. "I've an order from Sydney Town to arrest you for bigamy."

* * *

Ma Malloy turned back into the shanty as the barracks gate closed on the redcoats and their prisoner. She looked curiously at Corrigan.

"Why don't yer tell me before he's a pimp, Tim?" she asked reproachfully.

The crowsfeet at the corners of Corrigan's eyes wrinkled.

"I don't know that he is, Ma," he told her. "I reckoned none of the boys 'ud blame you for not marrying a pimp. I had to do something to earn my pay."

Ma Malloy rubbed her fat chin thoughtfully. "I'm thinkin' yer've earned double pay from now on, Tim Corrigan," she said.

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